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WORLD SOCCER

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The INTERNATIONAL Magazine

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SOUVENIRS TO BE WON

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Pointing the finger at the

TAYLOR and Sandford sounds like a dusty firm of Midlands solicitors. Quite the opposite. Judge Peter Taylor has delivered a stinging indictment of the domestic game; Arthur Sandford is the new Football League chief executive who wil be judged by his success in carrying through Taylor's recommendations.

For these are the two men on whose dynamism English football depends for new foundations on which to rebuild for the next century.

Soccer has attracted many prophets of doom over the years. Taylor, in his report into the Hillsborough disaster inquiry, also pointed his finger at the profits of doom. The significance of his vision of a game which responds to the spectator expectations of today, rather than yesterday, was of far greater signifiance than his demolition of the case for identity cards.

Those who took noisy public delight in the collapse of the ID legislation did not stop to think that one possible consequence could be the closing of the door back into Europe.

Condition

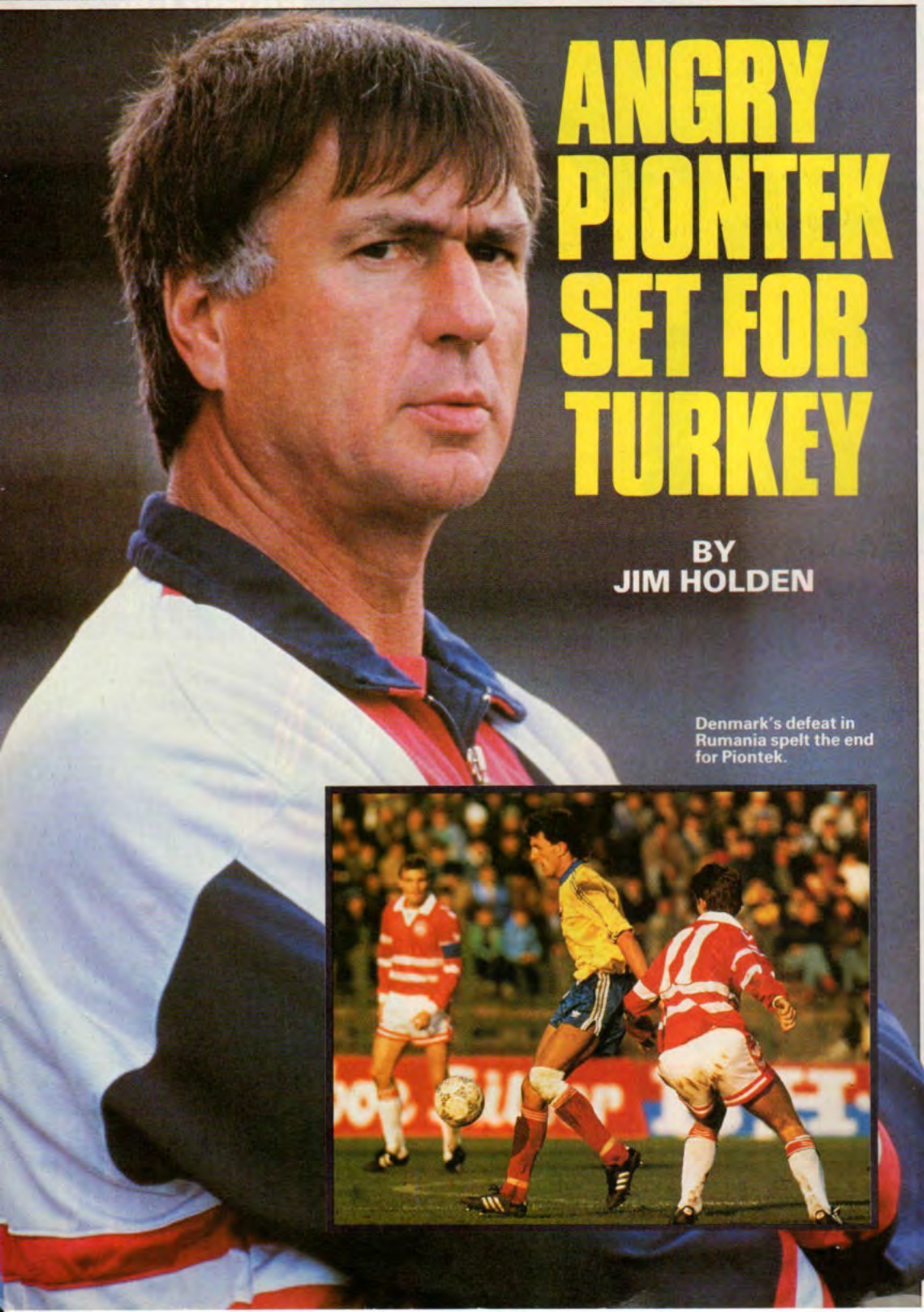
UEFA general secretary, Gerd Aigner, made it clear soon after taking office two years ago that a necessary condition for English clubs' return to European competition was Government action on hooliganism.

Taylor.

Sandford.

ANGRY PIONTEK SET FOR TURKEY

BY JIM HOLDEN



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George Courtney – England's only ref in the finals.

Pointing the finger at the profits of doom

BY KEIR RADNEDGE

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Whether the measures which previously stood in the shadow of the ID card proposals will be enough is open to question.

Taylor cannot have done the image of the English game any harm. Very few nations, if any, would have commissioned such a senior legal figure to take the game apart, piece by piece, and so publicly.

The demand for all-seater stadia was inevitable. Italy is using the World Cup to finance a major step in that direction; Dutch clubs have pledged to achieve it by the end of the decade; FIFA is insisting that all qualifying and finals matches in the 1994 World Cup shall be played in all-seat stadia.

New system

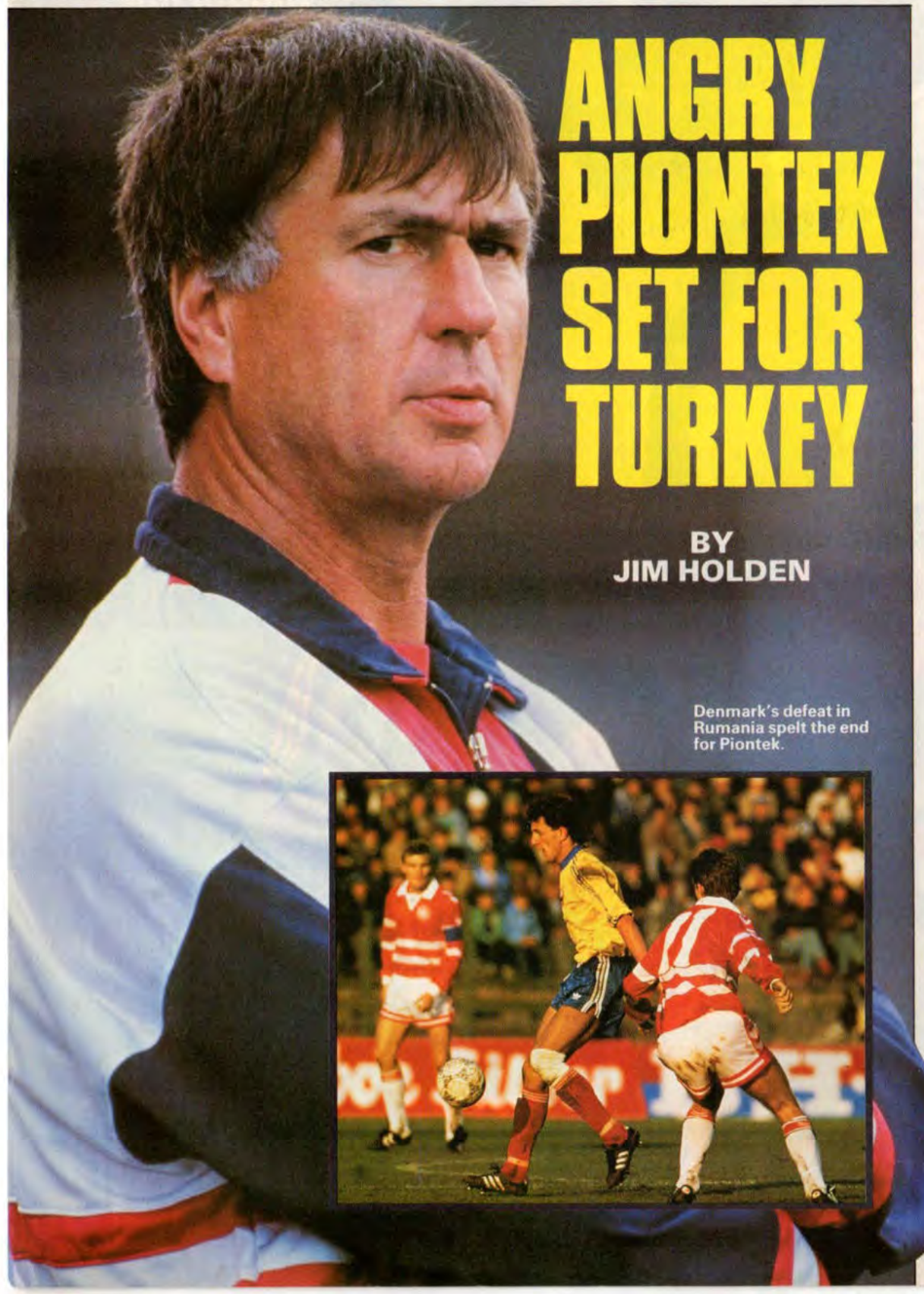
Taylor complains about soccer's misuse of its income. The clubs counter that transfer fees reflect a Thatcherite market rate. But, as the European Community labour laws threaten to bite, it is questionable whether an open-negotiation transfer system can survive much longer anyway.

A formal system by which fees are directly linked to age and earnings is inevitable sooner or later. That would almost certainly bring down the level of transfer fees and release extra finance for use in stadia redevelopment.

The public entertainment audience is becoming increasingly selective. That's the marketplace soccer needs to worry about.

ANGRY PIONTEK SET FOR TURKEY

BY JIM HOLDEN



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The beginning of the end for Piontek was the World Cup defeat by Rumania last October. The DBU wanted Piontek to stay on but twice he turned down their offers. Then he was offered a third, four-year contract, just 24 hours before the Euro draw in which Denmark were matched with Yugoslavia, Austria, Northern Ireland and the Faroe Islands.

Piontek said: "The draw looked good. But when a Danish newspaper called me at midnight to ask for a comment about allegations that I've hidden money abroad, I thought I had heard enough."

Some papers claimed that Piontek had avoided paying tax by depositing earnings in foreign accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. DBU spokesman Fritz Ahlstrom confirmed Piontek had an account in Liechtenstein – "but the federation deposits money in his account here and declare his income. Sepp pays his taxes and there is no truth in these allegations."

Piontek had transformed Denmark's well-paid and egocentric players – scattered among Europe's professional leagues – into a consistent and admired national team. Their initial impact was in knocking England out of the 1984 European championship qualifiers. They lost on penalties to Spain in the semis.

Next the Danes topped their qualifying group to make the World Cup finals ahead of the Soviet Union in Mexico in 1986. They reached the secound round before being cut down by Spain. Piontek, voted World Manager of the Year in 1983 by World Soccer, also guided Denmark to the finals of the 1988 European championship. But, once in West Germany, they lost all three first-round games.

Favourite to replace Piontek is his assistant, Richard Moller-Nielsen or Morten Olsen, now boss of Brondby.

GIAMPIERO BONIPERTI has resigned after 19 years as president of Juventus. Club owner Gianni Agnelli is said to favour Luca di Montezemolo, the FIAT-educated boss of the Italian World Cup organisation, as replacement.

George Courtney – England's only ref in the finals.

Vautrot is World Cup Final favourite

MICHEL VAUTROT of France is the early favourite for the prestige refereeing task of controlling the World Cup Final.

A strong hint of FIFA's thinking was revealed by publication of the referees' list for the finals in June and July. Not only are there two referees from the host nation – not unusual – but there are also two men from non-qualified France, Vautrot and Joel Quiniou.

FIFA secretary-general Sepp Blatter explained that it is shortly hoped to formalise World Cup refereeing selections, so that the referees at the finals can be the best around, rather than dictated by political and diplomatic consdierations.

The World Cup list – Europe: Vautrot, Quiniou (Fra), Kirschen (EG), Listkiewicz (Pol), Rothliesberger (Swz), Schmidhiber (WG), Courtney (Eng), Kohl (Aus), Van Langenhove (Bel), Smith (Scot), Soriano Aladren (Sp), Lanese, Agnolin (It), Fredriksson (Swe), Spirin (SU), Petrovic (Yug), Snoddy (NI), Mikkelsen (Den), Silva Valente (Port). S America: Wright (Brz), Loustau (Arg), Perez Hoyos (Uru), Cardellino (Uru), Maciel (Par), Hernan Silva (Chi), Jacome (Ec). Africa: Naji Jouini (Tun), Mohammed Hansal (Alg), Diramba (Gab). Asia: Al Sharif (Syr), Mandi (Bah), Takada (Jpn). North/Central America: Codesal (Mex), Ulloa Morera (CR), Mauro (US). Oceania: Lorenc (Aust).

France's Michel Vautrot.

You read it here first ... ten years ago

BY STAN LOVER

IN FEBRUARY, 1980, World Soccer readers considered a proposition by New York-based correspondent Paul Gardner that the offside law be amended. World Soccer suggested altering the margins so that a player IN LINE with the last-but-one defender should be deemed ONSIDE, not OFFSIDE.

Now that very proposal is to be debated by the International Board, soccer's law-making body, in Rome in June.

What is the significance and possible effect of the new law?

For decades offside has provoked controversy when apparently good goals have been disallowed or promising attacking moves halted in full flow. Match officials have suffered abuse and criticism, in applying the letter and spirit of the law – with a consequent undermining of authority and discipline.

Principle

Nobody seems to like offside but there has been no serious thought of scrapping the law because of the basic principle requiring players to remain "on the side" and behind the ball. As in other team ball games, such as rugby and hockey, an offside rule preserves the character of a game in which attacking moves rely on a team, rather than individual, effort.

Many proposals to reduce the controversial impact of the offside laws have been considered and experiments tried. All have failed to offer a real and lasting benefit to the game.

The last, significant change, adopted in 1978, eliminated the 'played on' clause by which a player could not be offside if a defending player had touched the ball on its way through to him. By contrast, the effect of this proposal would be encourage attacking teams and encourage more goals.

Not an earth-shattering change perhaps ? What is really significant is that the International Board is considering any change at all.

I do not see the proposed new law making any difference into the acceptability of officials' decisions, particularly in emotionally-charged top-level matches. But I do feel it is a step on the right direction.

STAN LOVER is FIFA lecturer for international referees courses.

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CONTENTS

World Cup Countdown:
Group C:
Sweden 4-6
Brazil 8-11
Costa Rica 12-13
Scotland 14-17
Group D:
West Germany 18-20
Yugoslavia 22-25
United Arab Emirates 26-27
Colombia 28-31
European Cup Previews 32-33
World Cup greats 34-35
Brian Glanville 36-37
African Nations' Preview 38-39
Europe 2000? 40-41
Trevor Brooking 42-43

ITALIA '90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

SWEDEN

EXILES HOLD THE KEY—AGAIN

BY TIMOTHY COLLINS

SWEDEN – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	1	1	0	0	3	2
Austria	23	8	2	13	36	42
Belgium	11	5	1	5	29	18
Brazil	10	2	3	5	16	27
Czech'kia	16	3	4	9	18	36
Egypt	2	2	0	0	10	0
England	13	3	4	6	14	23
Holland	18	7	3	8	40	33
Italy	17	5	5	7	21	22
Rep. of Ireland	6	4	1	1	14	7
Rumania	6	3	1	2	15	7
Scotland	6	2	1	3	7	9
South Korea	1	1	0	0	12	0
Soviet Union	19	6	7	6	25	37
Spain	8	2	3	3	11	11
United States	2	1	0	1	6	3
Uruguay	3	2	0	1	6	3
West Germany	29	13	6	10	50	50
Yugoslavia	10	3	2	5	13	16

SWEDEN, returning to the World Cup finals after a 12-year absence, should be more than capable of emulating the achievements of their last qualifiers in 1978. With a powerful, experienced and talented team, many of whom are enjoying successful careers with top clubs all over Europe, they have a much stronger all-round side than that which was eliminated in only the first round in Argentina.

That last World Cup finals campaign was a big disappointment for Sweden and, after two similarly disappointing exits after the first round and the second round in 1970 and 1974 respectively, heralded a long absence from the finals tournament for the first time since reaching the quarter-finals at the first attempt in Italy in 1934. A similar achievement is likely this summer.

The success of 1934 was, of course, improved upon in 1938 when the Swedes finished fourth – a remarkable achievement for a country whose football federation was not established until 1912 – and bettered again in 1950 when, with a completely rebuilt team, they finished third behind Uruguay and hosts Brazil.

After failing to qualify in 1954, Sweden made the most of being hosts themselves in 1958 by reaching that memorable final when Pele inspired Brazil to a 5-2 win in Stockholm.

The success – the Swedes played a big part in making the final such a memorable fixture – was in no small part due to the fact that the Swedes had decided for the first time to beldn their Italian-based stars Nils Liedholm, Gunnar Gren, Kurt Hamrin and Lennart Skoglund with the home-based players. It is a policy that has become customary now and will be repeated for the 1990 finals.

Johnny Ekstrom is a key man in Sweden's counter-attacking play.

The late 1950s remains, until now, the peak of Sweden's football achievements and offers the current squad, as represented by such illustrious stars as Liverpool's Glenn Hysen, Peter Larsson of Ajax, the Italy-based Robert Prytz and Glenn Stromberg and Mats Magnusson of Benfica, an ideal target to emulate when they take on Brazil, Scotland and Costa Rica in Turin and Genoa this June.

Like the fine Danish team of the early 1980's, the Swedes have proved it is possible to bring together a scattered collection of players from all over Europe and perform successfully as a team. Discipline and an intelligent application of tactics and teamwork are the keys. Their absence, or a lack of responsibility, is unlikely to be the Swedes' downfall as they proved in winning a qualifying section which included England, Poland and Albania.

Young Boy Ljung.

Although they were held to two 0-0 draws by England, their success in performing a double over Poland – 2-1 at home and 2-0 away – showed the levels to which they could rise with their classic north European 4-4-2 style in which everyone works very hard at giving support to the man in possession and speed on the break is crucial. In such a system, much depends upon the ability of the forwards like Magnusson and Johnny Ekstrom, now with Cannes, or Stefan Petterson of Ajax, to create havoc on powerful runs with the midfield moving up quickly in support.

Most of Sweden's success in qualifying is down to the work of manager Olle Nordin who took over from Lars Arnesson at the start of 1986 following Sweden's failure to qualify for the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico. Nordin made an auspicious start by taking the Swedes to a four-team tournament in West Berlin at Easter 1987 and beating West Germany and the Soviet Union to lift the then-divided city's trophy. That win galvanised confidence and set up the run to Italia '90 where Nordin will lead a team full of hope and ambition.

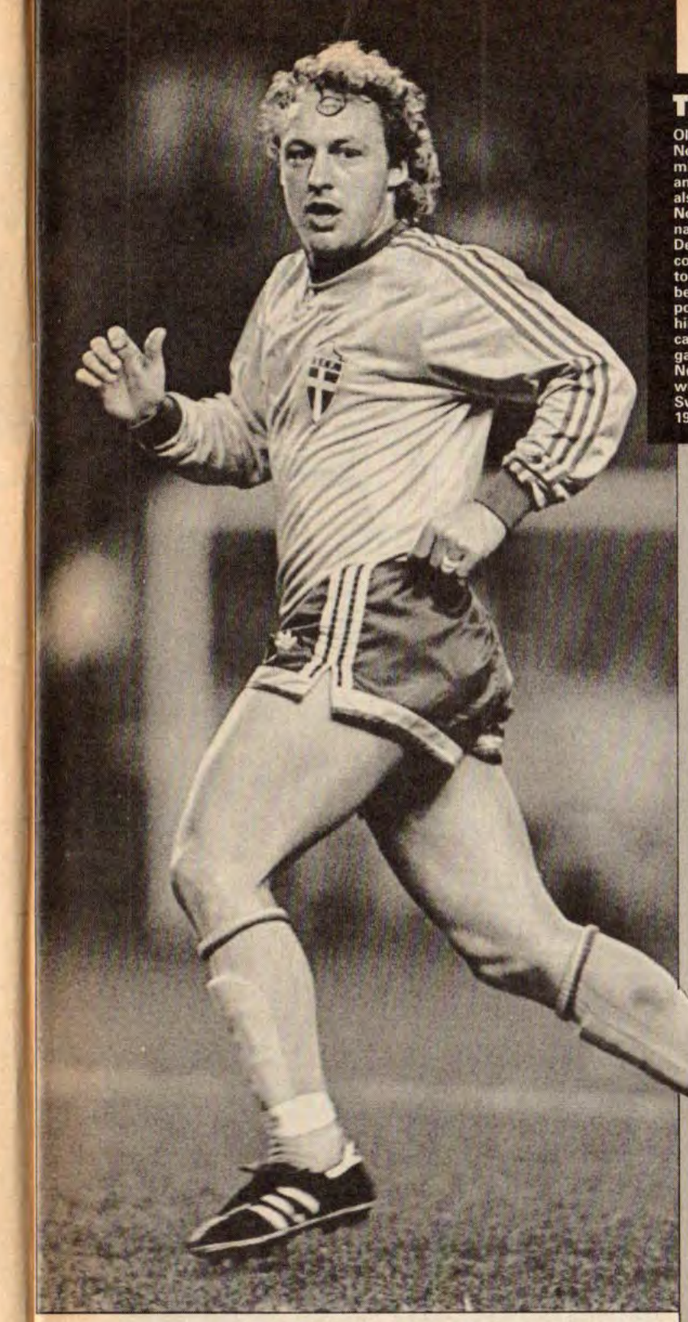
"When you've made it to the World Cup, anything can happen," he said. Can we reach the final? My honest answer is yes – why not? It is a good draw for us. We're in northern Italy where the climate suits us well. I would be very disappointed if we didn't reach the last 16."

Nordin's achievement with Sweden has been to transform the team from an efficient physical machine built on a sound and solid defence to a more flexible and modern side, capable of attacking in strength. "Swedish defenders used to say how wonderful it was to see our strikers working like slaves in defence," said Nordin. "Now the strikers are saying how good it is to see the defenders help create scoring opportunities. We are trying to be less cautious."

One major obstacle certain to evoke old memories stands in Sweden's early path – Brazil. The South Americans beat them 4-2 in the play-off for the third place in 1938, hammered them 7-1 in a 1950 semi-final and also delivered the Pele inspired 1958 final defeat. In more recent times, they drew 1-1 in 1978 (when Nordin was in the squad), drew 3-3 in a friendly in 1983, 1-1 in 1988 and won 2-1 last year when the Brazilians were on tour.

"It is fortunate for us to meet Brazil early in the tournament when they are more cautious," said Hysen. "With a bit of luck, we could take a point from that game. The Scots are not such a worry. They won't be able to run so much in the Italian heat. It is also an advantage to meet Costa Rica last when they are likely to be exhausted.

Sweden's build-up began in February with a 10-day training camp in Saudi Arabia and a friendly in Brussels against Belgium. They are due to play Algeria, Wales and Finland in April before tackling Brazil once again.



Former Rangers star Robert Prytz.

The MANAGER

Olle NORDIN. Aged 40 (born November 23, 1949). Played midfield for Norrkoping, Sundsvall and Gothenburg in a career which also saw him collect 19 full caps, Nordin took over as Sweden's national coach in 1986. Born in Delary, he has helped inspire confidence and greater aggression to the team and in the process become one of Sweden's most popular sporting personalities himself. He began his coaching career with Gothenburg before gaining further experience in Norway and was a surprise choice when he took over after the Swedes' failure to qualify for the 1986 finals.

The PLAYERS

Thomas RAVELLI. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born August 13, 1959) with 67 caps. IFK Gothenburg. Sweden's first-choice goalkeeper and considered to be one of the best in Europe, Ravelli has overcome a suspect temperament which saw him sent off during a 2-0 defeat by Mexico in 1983. His father was born in Austria, but emigrated to Sweden. His twin brother Andreas has also been a regular member of the squad as a defender or midfielder.

Sven ANDERSSON. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born October 6, 1963) with two caps. Orgryte. A capable deputy for Ravelli. Andersson broke through after playing as Sweden's first goalkeeper in the Seoul Olympics. He made his senior debut in April 1988 as a second half substitute against Norway.

Lars ERIKSSON. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born September 21, 1963) with three caps. Hammarby.

Glenn HYSEN. Central defender. Aged 29 (born October 30, 1959) with 60 caps. Liverpool. Joined Liverpool last year after two years in Italy with Fiorentina. He earlier starred for IFK Gothenburg in their UEFA Cup final triumph when they beat Dundee United in the final. IFK signed Hysen from minor neighbours Warta in 1978 and he quickly established himself as one of Sweden's finest players, winning the national Footballer of the Year award in 1982. In 1983, he signed for PSV Eindhoven, but failed to settle and returned to Gothenburg in 1985. A fast, intelligent and skilful defender.

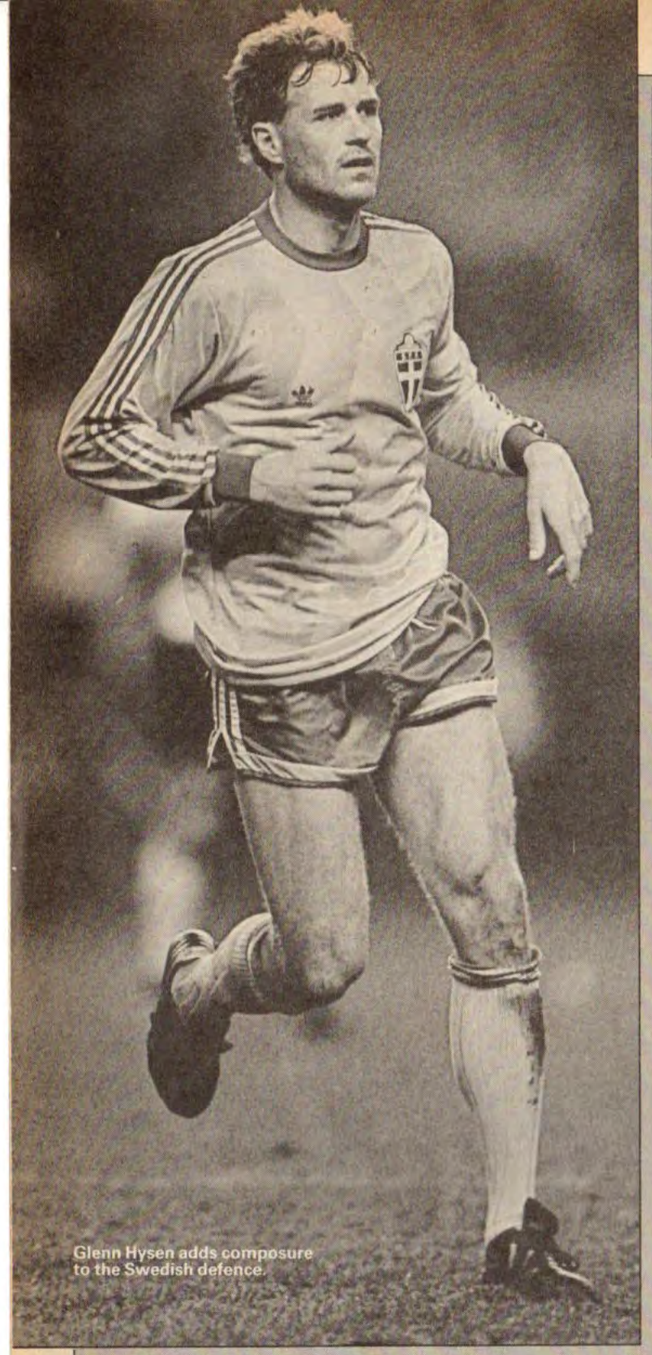
Roger LJUNG. Full-back/central defender. Aged 23 (born January 8, 1966) with 17 caps. Young Boys. Another of Nordin's graduates of the Olympic team who has developed rapidly since reaching the national side. More often plays left-back than anywhere else.

Peter LONN. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 1, 1967) with eight caps. Norrkoping. Another highly-promising young player who made a bright debut when he played in the side which beat the Soviet Union 3-1 in Tbilisi in 1987 and has progressed ever since.

Roland NILSSON. Right back/midfield. Aged 25 (born November 27, 1963) with 29 caps. IFK Gothenburg. A former youth international, he forced his way into the IFK team, after his move from Helsingborgs, during early 1986 and quickly took the next step to the full international team a few months later in a goalless draw against the Soviet Union.

Peter LARSSON. Central defender. Aged 29 (born March 8, 1961), with 32 caps. Ajax. Ranks alongside Hysen as Sweden's best defender of recent years. Signed originally from Halmstad by IFK Gothenburg to fill the gap left by Hysen's move to PSV, he quickly developed into a powerful replacement and partner to him in the national side. Played, like Hysen, in the Rest of the World

Thomas Ravelli is rated one of the best 'keepers in Europe.



Glenn Hysen adds composure to the Swedish defence.

SWEDEN

CONTINUED

side at Wembley in 1987. Helped IFK win the Swedish title in 1987 and was named Footballer of the Year before moving on to Ajax with whom he reached the Cup Winners' Cup final.

Anders LIMPAR. Midfield. Aged 24 (born August 24, 1965) with 18 caps. Cremonese. Discovered by former Swedish international centre-forward Agne Simonsson, he made his name with Orgryte where he attracted attention from several top European clubs, including Liverpool. Eventually moved on to Young Boys of Berne before joining Cremonese last year.

Robert PRYTZ. Midfield. Aged 30 (born January 12, 1960) with 57 caps. Verona. A dead-ball specialist with a fine shot, he made his name with Malmo for whom he played against Nottingham Forest in the 1979 European Cup final when only 19 and still a student. Left Malmo to join Glasgow Rangers in 1984, returned to IFK in 1985 and in same year left for Young Boys of Berne before moving on to Bayer Uerdingen in West Germany, then to Atalanta.

Glenn STROMBERG. Midfield.

Mats Gren.

Aged 30 (born January 5, 1960) with 47 caps. Atalanta. Made his international debut in 1-1 draw with the Soviet Union in June 1982 in Stockholm and has been a regular ever since. A key figure in IFK Gothenburg's 1982 UEFA cup win against Hamburg, he followed coach Sven Goran-Eriksson to Benfica where his powerful style made him a big success. After two years he moved on to Atalanta.

Joakim NILSSON. Midfield. Aged 23 (born March 31, 1966) with 15 caps. Malmo.

Stefan REHN. Midfield. Aged 23 (born September 22, 1966) with six caps. IFK Gothenburg. Appeared to be one of Sweden's new wave when he broke through into the side in 1988 following Djurgardens' promotion, but despite his driving form has failed to hold a regular place. Move to Everton last year was a disappointment and he returned to IFK last spring.

Jonas THERN. Midfield. Aged 22 (born March 20, 1967) with 20 caps. Benfica. Enthusiastic and competitive, he made a sensational start to his international career when he was sent off after scoring a fine goal in Sweden's Olympic clash with Tunisia in Seoul. He made his full debut in 1987 when he played in a 1-1 draw with West Germany.

Johnny EKSTROM. Striker. Aged 25 (born March 5, 1965) with 29 caps. Cannes. Began his career with IFK Gothenburg in 1986 and made an impression in the European Cup clashes with Aberdeen and Barcelona and also hit Sweden's winner against England in 1986. Soon moved on to Empoli who were later relegated and sold him to Bayern Munich. A quick, strong and accurate finisher who has scored 11 goals for Sweden.

Hans HOLMQVIST. Forward/left winger. Aged 29 (born April 27, 1960) with 24 cps. Cesena. Another of Sweden's enclave of Italy-based players. Holmqvist made his international debut in a 5-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago in Port of Spain in 1983. A forceful midfielder, he has enjoyed a chequered club career which has taken him from Djurgardens to Hammarby, Fortuna Dusseldorf, Hammarby again, Young Boys of Berne and finally Cesena.

Mats GREN. Forward.Aged 26 (born December 20, 1963) with nine caps.

Martin DAHLIN. Forward. Aged 21 (born April 16, 1968) with one cap.

Atalanta's Glenn Stromberg.

Malmo. The first black player to appear in a senior international for Sweden, he made his debut in the 1-1 draw with Brazil in 1988. Career was disrupted last year by a broken leg.

Jan HELLSTROM. Forward. Aged 30 (born February 21, 1960) with six caps. Norrkoping. A lively striker who made headlines when he scored the equaliser which earned a 1-1 draw with Brazil in 1988. Formerly with Orgtryte.

Mats MAGNUSSON. Centre-forward. Aged 26, (born July 10, 1963) with 21 caps. Benfica. Began his career with Malmo and made international debut in 1-1 draw with Mexico in 1984. Left for Servette but returned to Malmo from Switzerland in 1986. In 1987, he moved again to join Benfica and helped them to the1988 European Cup final against PSV. A strong, hard-working and skilful striker who has been outstanding for Benfica this term.

Stefan PETTERSON. Striker. Aged 26 (born March 22, 1963) with 15 caps. Ajax. A tall, quick and mobile striker, Petterson was sold to Ajax by IFK Gothenburg for a Swedish record fee of £1.3 million in 1988 and has enjoyed a reputation as one of Sweden's most successful exports. He began his career with Norrkoping.

Hans ESKILSSON. Forward. Aged 24 (born January 23, 1966) with six caps. Sporting Lison. Moved to Portugal from Hammarby in 1988 only six months after moving from Norrkoping. Scored the opening goal in Sweden's 2-0 win over Soviet Union in the final of the Berlin tournament of 1987. Generally seen as deputy for Ekstrom.

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ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

BRAZIL

SOUTH AMERICAN KINGS AIM FOR A CLEAN SWEEP

BRAZIL – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	71	27	16	28	110	121
Austria	8	5	3	0	12	4
Belgium	3	2	0	1	8	6
Cameroon	1	0	1	0	1	1
Colombia	15	12	2	1	44	7
Czech'kia	16	8	6	2	25	13
Egypt	4	4	0	0	12	1
England	14	7	5	2	20	12
Holland	4	2	0	2	6	4
Italy	10	5	0	5	16	16
Rep. of Ireland	3	2	0	1	9	2
Rumania	5	4	0	1	12	5
Scotland	7	5	2	0	11	2
South Korea	4	4	0	0	11	1
Soviet Union	7	5	1	1	13	5
Spain	7	5	1	1	16	8
Sweden	10	5	3	2	27	16
United States	2	2	0	0	6	3
Uruguay	57	29	11	17	101	75
West Germany	12	7	3	2	18	11
Yugoslavia	14	6	6	2	29	21

ANYONE who has the misfortune to go to a football match in Brazil will find it hard to believe that the same country is one of the favourites to win the World Cup.

Brazil's domestic game, the victim of appalling administration, continues to be characterised by dirty, defensive football, often played in front of fewer than three thousand yawning spectators.

The national side, on the other hand, is a different story. Recent victories away to Italy and Holland, as well as their Copa America triumph last year, have justifiably made Brazil many people's favourites to win in Italy.

And, while the team may not be as entertaining to watch as the 1982 side, the players have all the traditional Brazilian technique and could not be accused as being either violent or dull to watch. In the first half hour of their unfinished match against Chile, for example, the Brazilians produced some exhilirating football before the nerves took over.

Manager Sebastiao Lazaroni has said that his priority is to win the World Cup and he has tightened up the defence, but he would like to make the team entertaining as well. In any case, it is not his fault that Zico and Socrates are no longer available.

Criticism of the type that was recently made by Socrates who claimed that the current tactics are too rigid and limits the Brazilian players' traditional flair, must have Lazaroni banging his head against a brick wall in frustration because, in earlier matches, his team had been criticised for being tactically naive.

Lazaroni is the first Brazil manager to use a sweeper. Mauro Galvao currently fulfils the role and the players have been almost unanimous in their praise of the new system. The results speak for themselves – since the start of the Copa America, when it was introduced, Brazil have won ten of their fourteen games and drawn the remaining four, conceeding only two goals along the way.

The first-choice line-up is fairly clearly defined, with Taffarel as the undisputed number one goalkeepr, Ricardo and Aldair as the central defenders, Silas and Valdo in midfield and Bebeto and Careca up front. There are, however, still a few team selection decisions to be made.

Lazaroni's main dilemma is that he has three world class centre forwards, the third one being Romario. Does he therefore leave a player that most managers would give their right arm for on the bench or does he put all three of them together, which would creat an irresistible front line but which would also risk weakening the midfield? Given Romario's suspect temperament and his suspension from the opening match against Sweden, he may well opt for the Careca-Bebeto option.

Another area in which Lazaroni is spoilt for choice is the full-back position. The original couple were Branco and Jorginho but since the Copa America. Vasco's Mazinho has beenin outstanding form and cannot be left out.

Three players are disputing the sweeper position. Mauro Galvao has so far been the usual choice and he has proved to be more than adequae, but for the World Cup Mozer and Julio Cesar will also be available. Meanwhile, Alemao's recent performances for Napoli could earn him a place at the expense of Dunga, who is not having the best of times with Fiorentina. On balance, the likely side could be the following: Taffarel, Aldair, Richardo, Mozer, Mazinho, Branco, Silas, Valdo, Alemao, Careca and Bebeto.

Whatever happens, Lazaroni's selection problems are nearly all caused by the fact that he has an embarrasment of riches with two excellent players for virtually every position. All that is missing is someone who can control the game in the Zico style and perhaps a consisten second-choice goalkeeper.

For all the gifted players available, much of the credit for Brazil's revival must go to Lazaroni, who has built the team from scratch (nobody had the slightest idea who would form the basis of the team when he took over last year) and stuck by the 3-5-2 system despite the inevitable avalanche of criticism he received when it failed to come good straight away.

Apart from this, Lazaroni has survived a tour to Europe in which Brazil lost all three games played and scored a significant victory over the type of political interference that does so much to harm the Brazilian game. This happened during the Copa America when he defied pressure from CBF boss Richardo Teideira to include Bahia player Charles in the squad. He infuriated Teixeira but, by winning the competition, Lazaroni made it impossible for the president to sack him.

Lazaroni has also overcome the fact that most of Brazil's team are based in Europe. This has been done by arranging a series of friendly matches in Europe which have been carefully planned by Lazaroni and the team's co-ordinator America Faria toavoid clashing with European league and cup matches giving Lazaroni more chance of having his top players available.

This careful planning was a stark contrast to the ill- conceived list of friendlies that Teixeira announced when he took over as CBF president at the start of last year. In fact, since the Charles affair Teixeira seems to have been keeping well out of the way of national team affairs and the organisation has improved considerably.

The situation has been helped by the resignation of Eurico Miranda from the all-important director of football position and his replacement with the infinitely more competent Jorge Salgado. As long as Teixeira continues to keep his nose out of the way, it seems that Lazaroni will be able to work in relative peace.

All this will help Brazil to end the 20 years' wait for their fourth World Cup victory. The irony is that if they are successful, the domestic game's problems may be forgotten in the euphoria. And sorting out the domestic game is just a big a challenge as winning in Italy.

BY BRIAN HOMEWOOD

Below left: Silas is a vital part of the Brazilian midfield. Below: Careca is rated by many as his country's outstanding player. Right: Bebeto was top scorer in the Copa America.

Suspension rules out Romario from Brazil's first game in the finals.

THE MANAGER

Sebastiao LAZARONI. Aged 39. Took charge of the national team at the start of last year and after a difficult first six months, is now something of a national hero. Started as a goalkeeper with Sao Cristovao, a small Rio club, but abandoned his playing career in his early twenties to do a physical/ football coaching course. He came to prominence in 1986 by winning the Rio championship with Flamengo and repeating the success in 1987 and 1988 with Vasco. Chooses his words very carefully, which has led some to nickname his manner of speaking as Lazaronese.

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Dunga – the hard man of the midfield.

BRAZIL

CONTINUED

THE SQUAD

Claudio Andre TAFFAREL. Goalkeeper. Aged 23 (born May 8, 1966) with 14 caps. Undisputed first-choice 'keeper and another gaucho, Taffarel made his name during the Seoul Olympics where he saved three penalties during the semi-final against West Germany – one during the match and two in the penalty shoot-out. Good at high crosses and excellent positioning, he has the potential to become one of Brazil's best-ever 'keepers.

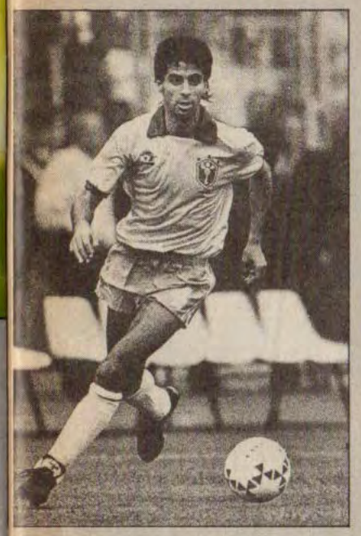
ACACIO. (Acacio Cordeiro Barreto). Goalkeeper. Aged 31 (born January 20, 1959). With 7 caps. Vasco. Likely to be the second choice to Taffarel, Acacio played in several friendlies early last year but blotted his copybook with some unconvincing displays. A Vasco veteran, he has good reflexs but is weak on crosses.

ZE CARLOS (Jose Carlos da Costa Araujo). Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born February 7, 1962) with two caps. Has spent all his career with Flamengo. Tall and agile but slow to come off his line. The third choice goalkeeper.

BRANCO (Claudio Ibrahim Vaz Leal). Fullback. Aged 25 (born April 4, 1964) with 18 caps. Established himself as the first choice left-back under Lazaroni. Good at going forward, the main problem is getting his released from his club.

ANDRE CRUZ (Andre Alves Cruz). Left back. Aged 21 (born September 9, 1969) with 13 caps. Flamengo. Has not played regular club football for two years because of disputes as to who owns him. This situation reached its silliest point last year when four clubs, Ponte Preta,Flamengo, Vasco and Como, all said that he had signed for them. The situation was resolved early this year with Flamengo coming out on top. In the meantime, he has kept in action playing for Brazil at various levels, including the Seoul Olympics. Possesses a powerful left-foot shot as he showed when he scored the winner in a recent friendly against Italy with a 25-yard free kick. Began with Sao Paulo club Ponte Preta.

MAZINHO. (Iomar do Nascimento). Left back. Aged 23 9born August 8, 1966) with 18 caps. Vasco. Along with Bebeto, he was the revelation of last year. Defends well without resorting to violence and like Branco and Jorginho, is good at getting forward. Versatile, he can also play at right-back (his more likely position with the national team) and midfield. Has spent his entire career with Vasco.



Left: Galvao may fill the sweeper role for Lazaroni. Above: Jorginho – facing a battle for his place.

MOZER (Jose Carlos Nepomuceno Mozer). Defender. Aged 29 (born September 19, 1960) with 2 caps. Marseille. Missed most of last season's games because his club consistently refused to release him. Before this, he had been a virtual certainty for the sweeper position. Learned his football with Flamengo before going to Benfica and then France. Missed the last World Cup with a knee injury.

RICARDO (Richard Gomes Raymundo). Defender. Aged 25 (born December 13, 1964) with 16 caps. Benfica. Elegant player with excellent ball control and the undisputed captain of the tream. Formed an excellent defensive partnership with Mozer at Benfica. He was discovered by Fluminense, for whom he made his debut at the age of 17 and where he stayed until his transfer to Portugal.

RICARDO ROCHA (Ricardo Roberto Barreto da Rocha). Defender. Aged 27 (born September II, 1962) with 5 caps. Sao Paulo. The Paulistas' only likely representative. Good enough to pay in any national team but has the misfortune to be around at the same time as Ricardo, Mauro Galvao, Aldair and Mozer. Played well in all his appearances last year.

JORGINHO (Jorge de Amorim Campos). Full-back. Aged 26 (born August 17, 1964) with 11 caps. Bayer Leverkusen. Dependable full-back who gets forward well. His was the first-choice for this position until missing the Copa America through injury. Unlikely for Jorginho, his replacement Mazinho was outstanding and he will have to fight to get his place back. Previously rather volatile, he has calmeddown since joinging the evangelical church. Discovered by America of Rio de Janeiro, he moved to Flamengo in 1983 where he stayed until going abroad last year.

JULIO CESAR (Julio Cesar Silva). Defender. Aged 27 (born March 8, 1963) with I cap. Montpellier. Returned to the side in December against Holland playing as a sweeper. He was one of Brazil's stars in Mexico but may struggle for a first-team place this time. Played Guarani before leaving for France in 1986, where he has also played for Brest and Nantes.

MAURO GALVAO (Mauro Geraldo Galvao). Defender. Aged 28 (born December 19, 1961) with16 caps. Botafogo. Established himself as Lazaroni's sweeper last year after a prominent role in Botafogo's historic Rio championship win earned him a place in the team. Was a reserve in the Mexico squad and his place is now under threat from Mozer.

ALDZAIR (Aldair Nascimento Santos). Defender. Aged 24 (born November 30, 1965) with 16 caps. Benfica. A Flamengo product who was sold to Portugal after the Copa America last year. Good ability in the air coupled with typical Brazilian technique on the ground have made him a first choice central defender under Lazaroni.

TITA (Milton Queiroz da Paixao). Midfield. Aged 3l (born April 1, 1958) with 5 caps. Vasco. Has returned to Vasco after a spell in Europe with Bayer Leverkusen and Pescara. Formed by Flamengo before playing for Gremio and Vasco (again).

VALDO (Valdo Candido Filho). Midfield. Aged 26 (born January 12, 1964) with 17 caps. Benfica. Another vital member of the team, his importance is best illustrated when you see what happens when he is not playing. Discovered by Gremio before going to Portugal. Missed the Olympics because his club failed to release him and is currently having similar problems.

DUNGA. (Carlos Caetano Bledorn Verri). Midfleid. Aged 26 (born October 31, 1963) with 16 caps. Fiorentina. Played an important part in the Copa America and World Cup qualifiers but has lost form after his transfer to Juventus fell through. A bit of a workhorse although his technique would put most British players to shame. Tackling can be over-zealous. A gaucho, he played for Internacional and Corinthians before moving to Italy.

GEOVANI (Geovani Silva). Midfield. Aged 26 (born April 6, 1964) with 4 caps. Bologna. At his best, his is the type of midfield general that Brazil could do with. But after shining at the Olympics in Seoul, he seems to have lost his way and his move to Bologna has not helped. Ex-Vasco.

SILAS (Paulo Silas do Prado Pereira). Midfield. Aged 24 (born August 27, 1965) with 17 caps. Sporting Lisboa. Another member of the evangelical church and a vital part of the midfield. He has just started playing again after contract problems with his club. Discovered and coached by Sao Paulo, where he formed part of the memorable 1986 national champions.

ALEMAO (Ricardo Rogerio de Brito) Midfield. Aged 28 (born November 22, 1961) with 10 caps. Napoli. A member of the 1986 World Cup team, he lost his place during the Copa America after a loss of form. His recent form for Napolo, however, could once again make him a first-choice player.

ROMARIO (Romario de Souza Faria). Forward. Aged 24 (born January 29, 1966) with 11 caps. PSV Eindhoven. An excellent forward, as he will be the first to acknolwedge. Scored the winning goal in the Copa America's decisive match against Uruguay, yet is likely to be a substitute unless Lazaroni decides to risk a three-man forward line. Temperamental, some also claim he is lazy, he is suspended from Brazil's opening game became FIFA handed him a three-match ban after he was sent off in the Santiago game against Chile for fighting. Romario claims he was bitten by an opponent. Another Vasco product and the last player you will see walking into an evangelical church.

MULLER (Luiz Antonio Correa da Costa). Forward. Aged 24 (born January 31, 1966) with 3 caps. Torino. Played in the last World Cup but since then he has had difficulty settling down in Italy. Torino's relegation has not helped. Discoved by Sao Paulo, with whom he won the Brazilian championship in 1986.

CARECA (Antonio de Oliveira Filho). Forward. Aged 29 (born October 5, 1960) with 7 caps. Napoli. Brazil's top-scorer in the last World Cup and a close friend of Maradona, he is widely regarded as Brazil's top player at present. Missed the Copa America last year through injury but played a vital part in the qualification for Italy, scoring four goals in one match against Venezuela and the winner against Chile at the Maracana.

BEBETO (Jose Roberto Gama de Oliveira). Forward. Aged 26 (born February 16, 1964) with 19 caps. Vasco. Undoubtedly the revelation of last year with his six goals in Copa America, but Brazil's defenders have known about him for a lot longer. He was Flamengo's top scorer for four years in a row before his controversial transer to Vasco. Originally from Bahia, it was with Flamengo that he began his career.

BISMARK (Bismark Barreto Faria). Forward. Age 20 (born September 17, 1969) with 8 caps. Vasco. A Vasco product, he was voted the best player in the World Yough Cup in Saudi Arabia last year. Not likely to play in Italy but shows a lot of promise for the future. One of several evangelicals in the squad.

RENATO (Renato Portaluppi). Winger. Aged 27 (born September 9, 1962) with 5 caps. Flamengo. He has returned to Flamengo after a difficult year with Roma, having started his career with Gremio.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

COSTA RICA

MOODY MEDFORD HOLDS THE KEY

BY PAUL GARDNER

COSTA RICA – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	2	0	1	1	0	2
Egypt	1	0	0	1	1	4
South Korea	2	1	1	0	4	2
United States	6	3	1	2	6	4

COSTA RICA is widely known as an oasis of democratic calm and reason among the otherwise turbulent countries of Central America. Where guerilla warfare and insurgency continually disturb neighbouring El Salvador and Nicaragua and Honduras, Costa Rica is a country that did away with its armed forces in 1948.

How right that Costa Rica should produce, in President Oscar Arias, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. And a football fan too, one who actively involved himself in Costa Rica's quest for a World Cup berth. (Which is more than can be said for the USA's Nobel-Peace-Prize-winning football fan, Dr Henry Kissinger, who did not put in an appearance at any of the USA's games).

That quest did not have a happy beginning – an inept 0-1 loss away to Guatemala. Immediately, the panic button was pressed, and the team's Uruguayan coach Gustavo De Simone was fired. For the second game, at home to Guatemala, the coaching duties were shared by Marvin Rodriguez and Spanish-born Antonio Moyano. Player changes were made, including the dropping of midfield star Alexandre Guimaraes, a naturalized Brazilian who was accused of slowing the game down. The panic moves worked – but only just.

Guatemala were beaten 2-1, but all agreed that it had been a fortunate win. President Arias was there, he even went to the team's locker room at half time to deliver a pep talk, but it took a late goal by Evaristo Coronade, against the run of the play, to ensure victory.

Things looked much brighter after the next game, a 1-0 home victory over the USA, the team that was regarded as the strongest in the group. Two weeks later, in St. Louis, the USA reversed that result, and the Costa Ricans complained bitterly about the Honduran referee who had disallowed two "goals" by Hector Marchena. Super-fan President Arias went on TV to say "It was definitely robbery", while the Costan Rican FA declared the referee persona non grata in Costa Rica.

But the awkward truth was that the Costa Ricans had only themselves to blame for not getting at least a tie, for they had missed a last-minute penalty kick.

Robbery or not, that was to be the last loss suffered by Costa Rica. Two wins over El Salvador, and a win and a tie with Trinidad sent Costa Rica to the top of the five team group with 11 points. After the final victory over El Salvador, fans poured onto the streets of San Jose to celebrate their country's first-ever qualification for the World Cup final round – even though there was still a mathematical chance that they could be edged out by the USA and Trinidad.

On August 10, when the USA could do no better than a 0-0 tie with Guatemala, Costa Rica was assured of its place in Italy.

It marked the high point in a recent series of victories that have seen Costa Rica qualify for the 1984 Olympic Games, for the 1985 U-17 World Cup in China, and the 1989 U-20 World Cup in Saudi Arabia.

These are remarkable achievements for a small country with a population of only 2.9 million. The Costa Rican Football Federation, founded in 1921, has some 15,000 registered players. The country has a 10 team professional first division, in which top players can earn between £500 and £1000 a month. Many of the top players are foreigners (maximum of two per club), second-string players from Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, etc., – who can star for Costa Rican clubs. Most of the average club players find it necessary to have a second job to make ends meet.

Bonus

For those players on the national team, qualification for Italy has meant a financial windfall, with a bonus of £10,000 each for the regular starters. Coach Marvin Rodriguez (now in sole command, co-coach Antonio Moyano having been dismissed at the end of May) is under contract to the Costa Rican Federation until July 31 this year, at a reported £5,000 per month.

Building his team around a nucleus of players from his old club, Deportivo Saprissa, Rodriguez was fortunate in one vital respect: injuries were few. In particular, he was able to field the same defence in all the qualifying games: goalkeeper Luis Conejo, and a back four of Vladimir Quezada, captain Roger Flores, Mauricio Montero, and Enrique Diaz. This was a unit that gave up only six goals in the right-game series. It proved remarkably effective in countering the aerial bombardment that the USA threw at it, winning most of the heading duels, and getting the ball away cleanly.

Tactically, the team plays a basic 4-4-2, but this is more than likely to be, on the field, a 3-5-2, with the adventurous Diaz advancing into midfield. In style, the Costa Rican game is a bit more athletic, perhaps even a little more European, than that of the other Central American countries. While the team has the players who can produce the traditional Latin short-passing game – notably midfielders Juan Cayasso, Hector Marchena and German Chavarria – it also uses the more direct approach of long balls out of defence to the speedy flank players Hernan Medford and Luis Jara. Prowling the opposing penalty area is the ever-dangerous Evaristo Coronado, with all the goal-poaching skills of a traditional centre-forward.

Asked to list the key players, coach Rodriguez mentions four names: captain Flores, Cayasso, Medford and Coronado. Though Medford is a player of fragile moods, who played in only two of the qualifying games.

Preparation for the World Cup has included a short tour of Europe in October last year, when three games were played and lost: Torino 2 Costa Rica 0, Roma 2 Costa Rica 1, Brno (Czechoslovakia) 1 Costa Rica 0. In January, Costa Rica played the Swedish club Gothenburg twice in San Jose, winning both games, 2-0 and 2-1. In February, Costa Rica travelled to Miami, and finished second to Uruguay in the Marlboro Cup – having soundly beaten the USA 2-0 on their way to the final. Planned games include a match in April against a Scottish club team.

On May 14 the team will leave for Italy, where it will make its headquarters in Mondovi, in the province of Cuneo, some 80 kilometers west of Genoa.

The World Cup draw was not kind to Costa Rica, grouping them with Brazil, Scotland and Sweden in what Rodriguez describes as "one of the strongest groups." But, says Rodriguez, "anything is possible in football. Our aim, of course, is to make the second round. We have four months to prepare, and we shall give a good account of ourselves. All the games are going to be very difficult, because we shall be facing much stronger teams than we played in the qualifying games. We have a lot of adjustments to make – our tactics, our mentality." But Rogriguez denies that these changes will result in a defensive approach: "No, we cannot play like that. Always, when we have the ball, we are an attacking team."

Hernan Medford can be a match winner on his day.

THE SQUAD

Luis CONEJO. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born January 1, 1960) with 27 caps. AD Ramonense. Tall, lithe, athletic goalkeeper who played all eight games in the final qualifying round. His fearless style brought him an injury in the away game in Trinidad, when he had to be substituted. The one player on the team from the "unfashionable" small club Ramonense. A music buff and guitar player, he lives in San Roman, and commutes to San Jose to train with the national team – and to play music with his friends.

Jorge Arturo HIDALGO. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born October 14, 1963) with 3 caps. CS Herediano. Solid performer, key player for his club Herediano, which has won the Costa Rican championship a record 20 times. Only appearance in qualifying round was as a substitute for the injured Conejo against Trinidad. Has worked as manager for a soft-drink bottling company in San Jose, now devotes himself to what he calls his "triangle"- football, his family, and his pets, which include dogs and tropical fish.

Vladimir QUEZADA. Right back. Aged 23 (born May 12, 1966) with nine caps. Deportivo Saprissa. Solid, workmanlike defender, a hard, secure tackler, who goes forward only rarely. Came on strong during the qualifying games, in which he played every game. Latest success in a noted local footballing family. Student of business administration and accounting. Unmarried, lives with his parents.

Roger FLORES. Sweeper. Aged 32 (born May 26, 1957) with 30 caps. Deportivo Saprissa. The captain and veteran of the team. Started with the Alajuelense club before transferring to Saprissa. Was in the 1984 Olympic team that beat Italy, and punished the Italians again in June 1988 when he scored the goal that beat club team Roma. A conservative sweeper who relies on quick thinking more than quick movement, picks his attacking moments carefully. It was his opportunistic headed goal against Guatemala that put new life into Costa Rica's qualifying campaign. Studying to become a coach at the National University's Sports School.

Mauricio MONTERO. Stopper. Aged 26 (born October 19, 1963) with 27 caps. LD Alajuelense. A strong, intimidating, physical presence at the heart of the defence. His robust, but fair tackling was a major factor in the 1-0 win over the USA. Had an unhappy time with penalty kicks during the qualifying round – giving up the penalty kick that allowed Guatemala to score a 1-0 win in the first game, then missing a crucial last-minute penalty in a 0-1 loss to the USA. Married with two daughters.

Enrique DIAZ. Left back. Aged 30 (born February 23, 1959) with 18 caps. Deportivo Saprissa. Tall, rangy left-footed defender, strong in the air. Capable of long, accurate passes from his left back position. Likes to attack, and possesses powerful long range shot. Member of the Costan Rican Olympic team that qualified for the 1984 Olympic Games. Owner of a retail bakery. Married, with two sons.

Juan CAYASSO. Midfield. Aged 29 (born June 24, 1961) with 24 caps. Deportivo Saprissa. Midfield playmaker, skilful passer of the ball, and a spectacular dribbler. Also a goal scoring threat – he collected 14 goals and 16 assists for Saprissa as they won the 1989 1st division title. Voted Costa Rican Player of the Year in 1989. Member of the 1984 Olympic team. Named by coach Rodriguez as a "key player". Lives with wife Marta, likes old movies, especially Hitchcock thrillers. Intends to take up computer studies after the World Cup.

Hector MARCHENA. Midfield. Aged 25 (born January 4, 1965) with 16 caps. CD Cartagines. Tall, skillful player whose abundant energy and speed belie his frail-looking physique. Plays vital central midfield role, is equally at home as a man-marker or as a goal-scorer. Against the USA, in St Louis, he got the ball in the net twice – but both "goals" were disallowed, one for offside and the other – very controversially – for an alleged handball. Unmarried, he lives in Cartagena with his brother, with whom he runs a car-hire firm.

German CHAVARRIA. Midfield. Aged 30 (born March 19, 1959) with 24 caps. CS Herediano. Neat, methodical midfielder, with the veteran's ability to control the pace of the game. Nothing flashy, but his passes are always intelligent, and he exerts a calming influence when his team is under pressure. Has been the subject to enquiries by Spanish clubs – his price tag is around £40,000 but he is probably now too old for a move. With his wife Angela, he owns a cosmetic boutique. TV fan, and devotee of electronic games.

Oscar RAMIREZ. Midfield. Aged 25 (born December 8, 1964) with 12 caps. LD Alajuelense. As a 19-year-old had a sensational game when Costa Rica beat the USA 1-0 in California to knock them out of the 1986 World Cup. Career since has been dogged by injuries, but his promise has attracted the interest of overseas clubs. He played in only two of the eight qualifying games. In 1989 he had a trial with the Spanish first division club Logrones. At 5ft 6ins, the smallest player on the team, but an inexhaustible bundle of energy and determination. Unmarried, lives with his parents and runs a sporting goods store in San Antonio de Belen.

Carlos Maria HIDALGO. Midfield. Aged 25 (born February 15, 1954) with 7 caps. Deportivo Saprissa. Left-sided defensive midfielder who played in seven of the eight qualifying games, four as a starter, three coming on as a substitute. Scored a goal in the 4-2 win away to El Salvador. Lack of consistency has hurt his career. Lives with wife Pamela and daughters Carolina and Gretel. Studies computer science.

Midfield dribbler Juan Cayasso.

Marvin OBANDO. Midfield, fullback or forward. Aged 30 (born April 4, 1960) with seven caps. CS Herediano. Short, stocky, left-footed, capable of playing in almost any position on the field. Made four appearances in the qualifying round. Devotes all his time to football, except when he is working on his car, or helping his eight-year-old son Marvin Andreas with his homework.

Alvaro SOLANO. Midfield or forward. Aged 29 (born June 25, 1961) with 16 caps. LD Alajuelense. Reliable if unspectacular player, with good close control and ability to play disciplined tactical game. A quality control expert for a meat-packing company. Married, with two daughters.

Luis JARA. Midfield or forward. Aged 31 (born May 6, 1959) with 20 caps (nine goals). CS Herediano. Attacking midfielder with many of the exciting qualities of an old-fashioned winger – tricky dribbling, body swerve and strong shot. Free kick specialist. A regular member of the team in 1988, he lost his place in 1989, but made a comeback in the last three games of the qualifying series. Works for the state electrical company, lives with his wife and their eight-year-old daughter Maria, and six- year-old son Alejandro.

Leoni FLORES. Forward. Aged 25 (born January 24, 1965) with 10 caps (three goals). Municipal Puntarenas. A late-blooming success story for the national team. Came off the bench in the game in El Salvador and scored two late goals in a 4-2 win. The goals so upset the home fans that they let fly with a barrage of missiles at their own goalkeeper which earned a stadium suspension from FIFA. Devotes all his time to football, has his heart set on playing overseas. Finished in third place in the 1989 Costa Rican Player of the Year poll.

Evaristo CORONADO. Forward. Aged 29 (born September 12, 1960) with 28 caps (five goals). Deportivo Saprissa. An out-and-out striker, the team's main goalscoring threat. Was the 1st division's leading scorer in 1989, with 19 goals and 11 assists in 37 games for Saprissa. Tall, strong player, at his best in the penalty box. Scored Costa Rica's first-ever goal in the finals of an Olympic tournament in a 4-1 defeat by Egypt in Los Angeles in 1984. A qualified engineer, who owns his own construction company. Greatly values his private life with his wife and daughters.

Hernan MEDFORD. Forward. Aged 22 (born May 23, 1968) with 16 caps (seven goals). Deportivo Saprissa. Exciting, speedy forward who scored 14 goals for Saprissa in the 1989 season. Erratic form limited his qualifying round appearances to two, but can be a match-winner on his day. Much will depend on his form if Costa Rica are to make any impact in the finals. Has temporarily suspended his studies in Business Administration to concentrate on football. Lives with his parents and is a lover of rock music videos.

THE MANAGER

Marvin RODRIGUEZ. Aged 54 (born November 26, 1934 in San Jose, Costa Rica). A lively, play-making midfielder in his playing days with Deportivo Saprissa, who won three 1st Division championships during his career there. Also played for clubs in Guatemala and El Salvador. Regular member of the Costa Rican national team between 1953 and 1964. Studies for coaching license in Mexico, began coaching career in 1965. As a coach, he has won seven 1st Division titles in Costa Rica (five with Sarissa, one each with CS Herediano and Municipal Puntarenas), and two in Guatemala (with Aurora and Municipal). Married, with two sons.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

SCOTLAND

ROXBURGH REALLY CAN BREAK NEW GROUND

BY ALEX GORDON

Aberdeen's Alex McLeish is the most capped international in the Scotland squad.

SCOTLAND – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	2	0	1	1	2	4
Austria	14	3	4	7	18	28
Belgium	13	4	2	7	19	22
Brazil	7	0	2	5	2	11
Colombia	1	0	1	0	0	0
Czech'kia	10	5	1	4	18	16
England	107	40	24	43	168	188
Holland	9	5	2	2	13	10
Italy	4	1	0	3	1	8
Rep. of Ireland	6	2	2	2	8	4
Rumania	3	1	2	0	5	2
Soviet Union	3	0	1	2	2	5
Spain	10	3	3	4	16	16
Sweden	6	3	1	2	9	7
United States	2	1	1	0	6	0
Uruguay	4	1	1	2	4	10
West Germany	10	3	4	3	17	15
Yugoslavia	8	2	5	1	16	11

THE world has forgotten the lion can road. Global sport could be hit by a tremor of monumental proportions in Italy this summer.

In the past four series of World Cup Finals Scotland might just as well have had a toothless lamb on their crest instead of the proud king of the jungle.

Let's face it. Scotland have won only three of their 12 games in the Finals in West Germany, Argentina, Spain and Mexico and have yet to throw caution to the wind and actually make history and emerge good enough to claim a place in the second phase of the tournament.

But I firmly believe Scotland will shock a few in Italy and this time they will get through what I believe is undoubtedly the toughest group in these Finals, including my own personal favourites Brazil, Sweden and Costa Rica.

Scotland have fumbled their way to these crucial moments in our soccer history and I hope I am not deluding myself, or anyone else for that matter, into thinking we have got a fair share of our mistakes out of the way in the qualifying section and can make the world sit up and take notice of some very fine footballers.

Not for even the merest split-second do I believe Scotland will actually lift any sort of medal. There once was a time I had the impression Scotland could rule the world if we played all our games at Hampden – like England did at Wembley in 1966 – but I started shaving and that notion wore off.

Despite horrendous, mishap-laden evenings in Zagreb and Paris and Jim Leighton's rush of blood to the head in allowing Norway to equalise with one of the daftest goals ever seen at Hampden, there must be an optimism about this Scottish squad.

Andy Roxburgh has coaxed and cajoled them all along the way and, with another four games in which to experiment before the June 11 meeting with Costa Rica, a blend will emerge that, hopefully, will get the best out of such excellent players as Richard Gough, Maurice Malpas, Paul McStay, Mo Johnston and Ally McCoist.

There isn't a nation in the world that would turn its back on five such high-calibre players. Given that playing behind one of the most jittery outfits in football at the moment, Manchester United, doesn't totally cave in the confidence of Leighton, he, too, is a performer who deserves the biggest stage.

Why am I so optimistic? The Laughing Academy probably beckons, but I think there could be a ruthless streak about this present-day outfit that clearly wants to atone for blunders made in the past while the world has looked on and enjoyed a good old-fashioned sneer at our expense.

Argentina '78 just will not go away, will it? Poor Ally MacLeod, now manager of Ayr United in the Scottish First Division, is still reminded of that colossal flop in dub-outs up and down the country every week.

Birds, booze and barbiturates – not necessarily in that order – seemed to be the order of the day, or so the world press told it, and it was little surprise that Scotland were pulverised by Peru and irked by Iran. When it didn't matter they went out and walloped Holland.

Four years on, and with Jock Stein replacing MacLeod, there was a more sensible, reasonably sane approach, but, in the end, the result was the same...Scotland were home after the first stage, beating New Zealand, losing to Brazil and drawing with Russia.

Formation

Mexico four eyars ago saw another low-key approach – again with the same inevitable outcome. Denmark and West Germany had odd-goal victories over Alex Ferguson's cohorts and 10-man Uruguay hacked and clawed their way to a goalless draw.

Now it's Roxburgh's turn to see if he can shape a formation that will prove to be more successful than those of Willie Ormond (in 1974), MacLeod, Stein and Ferguson. I think he can!

The late Bill Shankly was once asked about tactics before a Scottish international match. He fixed the uncomfortable questioner with a steely stare and, through a porridge-thick and haggis-honed accent, shot back: "Tactics? What tactics? I just look down at that little lion on my shirt and it simply tells me to get out there and get stuck in!"

It would be nice to hink that such a wonderful attitude prevailed today. Playing for your country has got to be the highest accolade afforded anyone and the troops who travel to Italy to perform for Scotland will assuredly be reminded of that fact by Roxburgh and his assistant Craig Brown.

Really, it's time to forget all about outrageous contracts, ridiculous transfer fees, huge endorsements and so on. It's time these professionals concentrated 100 per cent of their football for a few weeks out of their lives. I think this present squad can achieve that and derive satisfaction from it.

Dundee United's stylisth and resolute Maurice Malpas and Aberdeen's uncompromising Alex McLeish, a centre-back who rarely gets anything like the rich praise he deserves, could emerge as personalities. I believe they were Scotland's most consistent campaigners throughout the qualifying section.

Celtic's Paul McStay, the new Parkhead captain in place of Roy Aitken, now doing his stuff for Newcastle, of course, has awesome talent and equally awesome burdens to go with it.

Left-back Maurice Malpas has never let Roxburgh down.

His club side have hardly enjoyed a memorable season so far and that is certainly not due to any fault of McStay. However, I think the Italy Finals will see a hungry McStay in their midst and, with added determination, he, too, could be one of the performers of the tournament.

Ally McCoist and Mo Johnston will score goals in anyone's company and I believe, after an initial hiccup, they are most certainly getting their act together at Rangers.

Both are in their prime and this is the stage they have been waiting for. If they get reasonable service I'm; certain they'll do the business where it matters most, in your opponents' penalty box.

The key games in Section C for Scotland are against Costa Rica in the opener and the second match against Sweden five days later. Good results in those encounters mean the Scots will not be under extreme pressure by the time they face Brazil in Turin in June 20.

The draw has been unking, Scotland would assuredly have wanted Costa Rica last in the section when their rivals might have been softened up and Roxburgh's side would have known exactly how many goals they might have needed to get through to the next stage.

However, there is little point in moaning. There are three hurdles to overcome and Scotland have the players to answer the respective challenges.

Yes, it's high time the world heard the bellow of that ferocious Scottish lion again!

Mo Johnston shows his acrobatic skills with this spectacular goal against Cyprus in the qualifying stages.

THE MANAGER

Andy ROXBURGH. Aged 46 (born August 1943). Played as a striker during his career with Queen's Park, Falkirk, Partick Thistle and now-defunct E.S. Clydebank. Was a surprise choice to take over from Alex Ferguson after the Mexico World Cup Finals four years ago. He is a well-respected coach, highly-rated by FIFA, and has been involved with football at every level in Scotland.

Skipper Roy Aitken is facing a battle to hold on to his midfield place.

SCOTLAND

CONTINUED

THE SQUAD

Jim LEIGHTON. Goalkeeper. Aged 31 (born July 24, 1958) with 53 caps. Rated as one of the best in the world, despite his indifferent form for Manchester United and recent internationals. But Leighton was one of the best Scots in Mexico four years ago when the pressure was on and he's looking for a repeat in Italy.

Andy GORAM. Goalkeeper. Aged 25 (born April 13, 1964) with 6 caps. His form for Hibs since signing from Oldham for £350,000 three years ago has been outstanding. Has been challenging Leighton all the way for No. I place.

Bryan GUNN. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born December 22, 1963). No caps. Like Leighton, he is a former Aberdeen goalkeeper. Seems destined to understudy his great pal Leighton. The Norwich 'keeper has been one of the most consistent in the English First Division this season.

Richard GOUGH. Defender. Aged 27 (born April 5, 1962) with 44 caps. The versatile Ranger, who cost £1.5 million from Spurs three season ago, has proved to be one of manager Graeme Souness' most astute signings. His aerial threat will be a menace to any team. Scored two fine goals in the tricky qualifying tie in Cyprus.

Stewart McKIMMIE. Defender. Aged 27 (born October 27, 1962) with 2 caps. Aberdeen fans will tell you the former Dundee right- back is one of the finest in the country. He is versatile and speedy and has stepped into the sweeper's role when Willie Miller has been injured.

Steve CLARKE. Defender. Aged 26 (born August 29, 1963) with 5 caps. He cost Chelsea £400,000 from St. Mirren three season ago and has been a mainstay in the Stamford Bridge outfit. Scores valuable goals with well-timed runs from deep positions.

Alex MCLEISH. Defender. Aged 31 (born January 1, 1959) with 66 caps. Great in the air, highly-dependable and nimbe on the ground for such a tall defender. Like Gough, he can make his presence felt at deadball situations.

Gary GILLESPIE. Defender. Aged 29 (born July 7, 1960) with 7 caps. Ball-playing back-four player who is happiest playing beside the central defender. Played for Scotland in Yugoslavia at right-back, but didn't shine as the Scots lost 3-1 – that was his first taste of deafeat in a Scottish jersey.

Willie MILLER. Defender. Aged 34 (born May 2, 1955) with 65 caps. Picked up a bad injury in the 1-1 draw with Norway at Hampden, but the Pittodrie lionheart is confident he will be fit to play in Italy. One of the best sweepers in the game.

Maurice MALPAS. Defender. Aged 27 (born August 3, 1962) with 31 caps. Consistent left-back who uses the ball well.Links superbly with the midfield. Skipper of Dundee United and a mainstay for club and country.

Derek WHYTE. Defender. Aged 21 (born August 31, 1968) with 2 caps. The Celtic younster has crammed a lot into his brief career, winning League and Cup medals. A fine passer of the ball.

Craig LEVEIN. Defender. Aged 25 (born October 22, 1964). No caps. The Hearts star, watched by Spurs this season, has made a fine comeback after injury last year. Good in the air and uses the ball well.

Steve Nicol. Defender/Midfielder. Aged 28 (born December 11, 1961) with 23 caps. The powerful Liverpool man is a right-sided tornado whose versatility is invaluable. He is desperate to show his real form in a Scottish jersey in these Finals.

Roy AITKEN. Defender/Midfielder. Aged 31 (born November 24, 1958) with 50 caps. Caused a sensation when he left his beloved Celtic in a £500,000 move to English Second Division side Newcastle. Powerful captain who urges on his team by example.

Paul McSTAY. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born October 22, 1964) with 41 caps. A creative player with excellent touches and vision. Doesn't score as many goals as he should, considering he has such a powerful shot. Has taken on added responsibility at Celtic by taking over as captain from Aitken.

Jim BETT. Midfielder. Aged 30 (born November 25, 1959) with 22 caps. Talented, clever left-sided player of Aberdeen, who was one of Scotland's best players when they drew 1-1 with Norway to clinch their place in the World Cup Finals.

Striker Ally McCoist will score goals in any company.

Left: Gordon Strachan made his international return in the 3-0 defeat in France and is pushing for a place in the finals squad. Right: Paul McStay could make a big impact in Italy.

John COLLINS. Midfielder. Aged 22 (born January 31, 1968) with 1 cap. One for the future. The Hibs youngster has suffered in his club side's erratic form, but, on his day, is one of the finest talents in the country.

Brian McCLAIR. Striker. Aged 26 (born December 8, 1963) with 13 caps. The former Celtic forward who cost Manchester United almost £1 million, has not enjoyed the best of seasons, but his runs from deep positions could be a feature of Andy Roxburgh's ploys.

Mo JOHNSTON. Striker. Aged 26 (born April 30, 1963) with 30 caps. Controversial goalscorer, one of the rare players in history to play for Celtic AND Rangers. Created a furore during the summer when he agreed to rejoin Celtic from Nantes, then, after a contractual hitch, decided to sign for great rivals Rangers for £1.3 million. Scoring goals as usual, at club and country level despite the controversy.

Ally McCOIST. Striker. Aged 27 (born September 24, 1962) with 20 caps. Johnston's front-line partner with Rangers and the all-time record goalscorer in the Premier League. Feeds off Johnston well and will score goals in anyone's company.

Gordon DURIE. Striker. Aged 24 (born December 6, 1965) with 4 caps. His progress has been hampered by injury since Chelsea signed him from Hibs., but the nippy, little striker still has a goal record of which to be proud.

Alan McINALLY. Striker. Aged 27 (born February 10, 1963) with 4 caps. The Bayern Munich striker, who has also played for Ayr United, Celtic and Aston Villa, is an old-fashioned, up-and-at-'em attacker. Unpredictable, but still deadly in front of goal.

Davie COOPER. Winger. Aged 34 (born February 25, 1956) with 15 caps. Has taken on a whole new lease of life since signing for Motherwell for a bargain £50,000 from Rangers earlier this season. He is revelling in the added responsibility and has been one of the most consistent wingers in the Premier League.

ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

WEST GERMANY

MATCHWINNER MATTHAUS CAN LIFT TROPHY

BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

Main man in midfield – Lothar Matthaus.

WEST GERMANY – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	11	4	2	5	16	16
Austria	29	16	5	8	58	47
Belgium	17	12	1	4	42	22
Brazil	12	2	3	7	11	18
Czech'kia	14	8	2	4	33	23
Egypt	1	0	0	1	1	2
England	18	6	3	9	24	37
Holland	27	11	9	7	61	49
Italy	22	5	7	10	28	35
Rep. of Ireland	14	7	2	5	26	19
Rumania	9	7	1	1	32	10
Scotland	10	3	4	3	15	17
Soviet Union	11	8	0	3	35	10
Spain	15	7	4	4	21	16
Sweden	29	10	6	13	50	50
Uruguay	6	4	1	1	12	5
Yugoslavia	24	13	3	8	41	31

WEST GERMANY reached the World Cup finals for the 12th time and kept their proud record of never having failed to qualify (they did not compete in 1930 and 1950). They are the only country who have played in five Finals and won two titles.

They could make it a hat-trick, as Brazil and Italy have done, for according to a general consensus of opinion among European experts, this could be the most open tournament for a long time.

The South Americans may not be as dominant, for in the whole history of the World Cup only one country (Brazil in 1958), won the trophy outside their own continent. This tradition would seem to favour the Europeans next summer.

The hosts and favourites Italy, however, appear to lack goal scoring power – they've finished 1989 with four matches in which they only scored one goal and that was against the minnows from Algeria. European champions Holland have problems, so that would leave the Germans as serious contenders, moreover as they will enjoy to a large degree almost home advantage.

Five members of their squad are playing for Italian clubs, among them captain Lothar Matthaus, midfielder Andy Brehme and striker Jurgen Klinsmann, all with FC Internationale in Milan where the West Germans are based to play their initial three group matches.

If the Germans win the group they would stay in Milan. And should they succeed in Round Two, they will play their quarter-final also in Milan! Thus, five successive matches beckon in the same huge stadium with massive support, from the Italians as well.

Team manager Franz Beckenbauer is handing over the reins after the World Cup to his former international team mate Berti Vogts and would obviously like to finish his managerial career on a high note. He claims that his team is young and still developing, but in actual fact, of the thirteen men (including the subs) who clinched qualification by beating Wales 2-1 in Cologne, seven were either 27 or over.

Four members of the squad played in the last World Cup final against Argentina – Matthaus, Brehme, Rudi Voller and Thomas Berthold.

Perhaps Beckenbauer is thinking of his midfield which does include younger players like Thomas Hassler (23), Hansi Dorfner (24) and Andy Moller (22). A lot of responsibility rests on their shoulders. The last West German World Cup side was better known for its grit, fighting spirit and physical commitment. Now, at last the artists are taking over.

Schemer

Certainly Hassler combines all the virtues of a top class schemer; technically superb, speedy and a dangerous goal poacher. Moller too is a top class playmaker, with flair and imagination, who can decide a match.

His vision is quite remarkable in one so young and his free-kicks are prodigious. Dorfner, as understudy to Matthaus, is noted for his clever passing and splendid understanding, though he lacks scoring power.

Not forgetting Pierre Littbarski, nearly 30, an "old hand", still an ace dribbler, recently in top form and a great inspiration to the youngsters.

With regards to the defensive block, Kaiser Franz now has few reservations. After trying out 16 different sweepers the man in possession is Bayern Munich's redoubtable captain Klaus Augenthaler, at 32 the oldest man in the squad. His long distance shooting is still as formidable as ever and if his legs carry him in Italy through the heat, then all will be well at the back.

In goal Bodo Illgner is still the No. 1 despite some recent lapses at club level. The media are clamouring for the inclusion of in-form Uli Stein (35), but he still hasn't made his peace with Beckenbauer after the row and his walk-out during the Mexico finals.

Up front the vastly experienced Voller and the speed merchant Jurgen Klinsmann are the main hopes as lethal finishers. Voller is a superb striker, now apparently fully fit. Young Klinsmann is still developing, but has learned a lot in Italy. His pace and goal instinct are also invaluable, though he tends to miss chances.

But the most important and authoritative player is Matthaus, the captain, equally useful in defence as in attack; according to Beckenbauer "an indispensable" player. Not a playmaker, but a strategist, like Paul Breitner used to be. His dynamic charges, fulminating shooting and constant mobility over 90 minutes often contribute to deciding a match.

It is assumed that the Germans will play with a sweeper behind two man markers and with five in midfield, plus two strikers.

Beckenbauer, who after the World Cup will become a marketing manager with the DFB, claims that "the national team doesn't need me anymore. Apart from some individual weaknesses, I can do no more to improve the composition of the side. The situation is now much better than when I took over in 1984. The 1988 European Championships came too early for this side."

The draw was kind to the Germans who are expected to finish ahead of Yugoslavia, Colombia and the United Arab Emirates. Beckenbauer himself is looking at least for a place in the last four.

Klaus Augenthaler.

THE MANAGER

FRANZ BECKENBAUER. Aged 44. Nicknamed "Kaiser" (Emperor). His appointment in 1984 provoked a chorus of disapproval from the West German club managers because he did not have a coaching licence. This was "presented" to him in recognition of his services by the DFB as late as last year.

Yet, "Kaiser Franz" is the most successful and most decorated player in German history who has won just about everything there is to win in football.

He gained a record 103 caps between 1965 and 1977 and captained the national side 50 times. Won the World Cup and the European Championship, while at club level he collected three European Cups, one Cup Winners' Cup and the World Club championship medal.

On the domestic front he won with Bayern Munich the league five times, the Cup four times and with New York Cosmos the US-championship three times. He was voted 'European Footballer of the Year' twice, West Germany's 'Footballer of the Year' four times and once in the USA. He was decorated with the prestigious 'Cross of Merit' by his government.

Beckenbauer's first club was SC Munich 1906, then Bayern Munich, New York Cosmos and Hamburger SV. The elegant and sometimes aloof star was the inventor of the attacking sweeper ('libero') role and appeared six times in a World XI and twice in a Europe XI.

As manager he took the national side to the World Cup runner-up spot in 1986 and now could end his managerial spell with the ultimate triumph – the World Cup, which he already held aloft as captain of the winning side in 1974. He will stand down after the World Cup to become marketing executive manager with the DFB (FA).

Thomas Hassler is the great hope of German football.

THE SQUAD

Bodo ILLGNER. Goalkeeper. Aged 22 (born April 7, 1967) with 12 caps. Koln. Made headlines in 1987 when he replaced the "disgraced" international Toni Schumacher in the club side and after just six Bundesliga games was called up into the full national squad. Very good reflexes and positional play, less effective in commanding his area, or in organising the defence.

Raimond AUMANN. Goalkeeper. Aged 26 (born October 12, 1963) with one cap. Bayern Munich. With Bayern for nearly ten years – six of them spent as understudy to the great Belgian Jean-Marie Pfaff. Trains under the legendary Bayern 'keeper Sepp Maier. Cool under pressure with quick reactions. On his day the best in the country.

Andreas KOPKE. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born March 12, 1962) no caps. Nurnberg. Came from Hertha Berlin; enjoyed a marvellous last year, when rated the best in the league. Recently voted ahead of his national squad colleagues Illgner and Aumann, though behind Stein and Vollborn.

Klaus AUGENTHALER. Sweeper. Aged 32 (born September 26, 1957) with 17 caps. Bayern Munich. Back in favour, a commanding defender able to fill any position in the back four. Very effective going forward, has a cracking shot. Nearly 15 years with Bayern. Club captain.

Stefan REUTER. Defender. Aged 23 (born October 16, 1966) with 15 caps. Bayern Munich. A useful all-rounder, fast and a non-stop runner. Can play at the back, or in defensive midfield. Joined Bayern from Nurnberg for 1 million in 1988.

Guido BUCHWALD. Defender. Aged 29 (born January 24, 1961)

WEST GERMANY

CONTINUED

with 29 caps. VfB Stuttgart. A reliable man marker, uncompromising in the tackle, he is one of the pillars of the German defence. Joined VfB from local rivals Stuttgarter Kickers nearly seven years ago.

Alois REINHARDT. Defender. Aged 28 (born November 18, 1961) with three caps. Bayer Leverkusen. Signed from Nurnberg in 1984. A tough, determined defensive player with a calming influence. Used lately in the national team as sub, when better organisation was needed at the back.

Jurgen KOHLER. Defender. Aged 24 (born October 6, 1965) with 24 caps. Bayern Munich. Plagued by a complicated injury lately, a typical stopper, superb tackler, fast, hard-shooting and very strong in the air. Joined Bayern from Koln last year for £1 million.

Thomas BERTHOLD. Defender. Aged 25 (born November 12, 1964) with 31 caps. AS Roma. A well built player also useful in midfield. Highly valued for his "Italian" experience, first with Verona, now in Rome.

Holger FACH. Sweeper. Aged 27 (born September 6, 1962) with five caps. Bayer Uerdingen. Converted from midfielder to 'libero' and in that position useful to have in the squad. Has great vision and loads of experience (over 200 Bundesliga games). Came from Fortuna Dusseldorf in 1987.

Andreas BREHME. Defence/or midfield. Aged 29 (born November 9, 1960) with 47 caps. Inter-Milan. Basically a strong defence man, but with attacking flair and feared for his fierce free kicks. Previously with Saarbrucken, Kaiserslautern and Bayern Munich.

Thomas HASSLER. Midfielder. Aged 23 (born May 30, 1966) with 8 caps. Koln. Voted "Player of the Year" by team boss Beckenbauer and the 18 Bundesliga club captains. The Berlin-born schemer is the great hope of German football. Technically accomplished, speedy and has marvellous vision. A string of clubs are clamouring for his signature.

Hans DORFNER. Midfielder. Aged 24 (born July 3, 1965) with 7 caps. Bayern Munich. Joined Bayern from neighbouring Nurnberg in 1986. A fine tactician with excellent technique and speed off the mark.

Andreas MOLLER. Midfielder. Aged 22 (born September 2, 1967) with 7 caps. Borussia Dortmund. The star of Dortmund's 4-1 – Cup final win over Bremen. Another new star, a typical playmaker, inventive and willing to take responsibility. Joined Dortmund from Frankfurt for £800,000 now said to be ready to move anywhere.

Hans PFLUGLER. Midfielder. Aged 30 (born March 27, 1960) with 9 caps. Bayern Munich. Experienced left-sided defensive player nearly 15 years with Bayern. A courageous and dependable ball winner.

Gunter HERMANN. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born December 5, 1960) with one cap. Werder Bremen. Nearly ten years with Werder. Vastly experienced, intelligent, creative player valuable as first reserve.

Rudi Voller strikes in the 2-1 World Cup win against Wales.

Olaf THON. Midfielder. Aged 23 (born May 1, 1966) with 30 caps. Bayern Munich. Joined Bayern from Schalke for £1.1 million in 1988. Highly talented, yet, has so far failed to fulfil the great promise.

Lothar MATTHAUS. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born March 21, 1961) with 70 caps. Inter-Milan. Not the 'playmaker', but rather a grafter and ball winner, a midfield dynamo with a lethal shot. Bayern paid Borussia Monchengladbach £700,000 for him in 1984, then sold him to Inter for a massive £2.5 million in 1988.

Pierre LITTBARSKI. Attacking midfielder. Aged 29 (born April 16, 1960) with 63 caps. Koln. A talented dribbler with a cracking shot. Joined Koln from Hertha Zehlendorf (Berlin) in 1978, left for Racing Club of Paris for £870,000 in 1986; returned a year later for £930,000.

Uwe BEIN. Attacking midfielder. Aged 29 (born September 26, 1960) with two caps. Eintracht Frankfurt. Was previously, among other, with Koln and Hamburg. A dynamic attacker who averages a goal every third match. Sparked off Eintracht's amazing revival.

Jurgen KLINSMANN. Striker. Aged 25 (born July 30, 1964) with 14 caps. Inter-Milan. His pace, control and finishing make him one of Europe's top marksmen. Stuttgart collected for him £1.3 million, whilst Klinsmann pocketed the same amount, last summer.

Rudi VOLLER. Striker. Aged 29 (born April 13, 1960) with 60 caps. AS Roma. A former Bundesliga top scorer and 'Footballer of the Year', whose main assets are technique and goal instinct; the Germans' most complete forward. Moved from Bremen to Roma for £3.8 million in 1987.

Karlheinz RIEDLE. Striker. Aged 24 (born September 16, 1965) with four caps. Werder Bremen. Still developing as a typical counter attacker. Very strong in the air. Joined Bremen from Blauweiss Berlin (1987).

Jurgen Klinsmann's pace and strength could trouble opposing defences in the finals.

Frank MILL. Striker. Aged 31 (born July 23, 1958) with 15 caps. Borussia Dortmund. A solid rather than spectacular centre forward, but a consistent goal scorer. Joined Dortmund from Monchengladbach in 1986.

Roland WOHLFARTH. Striker. Aged 27 (born January 11, 1963) with two caps. Bayern Munich. Last season joint top scorer in the Bundesliga with 17 goals, and though plagued by injury he was at the winter break again joint top marksman. Came from MSV Duisburg in 1984 and despite Bayern constantly signing new strikers such as £1m rated Alan McInally from Aston Villa, Wohlfarth remains a great favourite with the Munich fans.

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ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

YUGOSLAVIA

SLAVS STILL THAT BREAK

Dragan Stojkovic is expected to join Marseille after the finals.

YUGOSLAVIA – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	5	2	1	2	10	9
Austria	16	6	4	6	33	37
Belgium	11	5	2	4	17	15
Brazil	14	2	6	6	21	29
Colombia	2	2	0	0	6	0
Czech'kia	30	9	4	17	50	87
Egypt	5	4	0	1	17	6
England	13	4	5	4	19	21
Holland	5	3	1	1	10	5
Italy	17	8	5	4	24	21
Rep. of Ireland	2	1	0	1	4	3
Rumania	40	17	5	18	65	63
Scotland	8	1	5	2	11	16
South Korea	3	3	0	0	11	3
Soviet Union	17	2	4	11	17	33
Spain	14	4	4	6	12	14
Sweden	10	5	2	3	16	13
United States	1	1	0	0	9	1
Uruguay	5	2	0	3	6	16
West Germany	24	8	3	13	31	41

YUGOSLAVIA were one of only four European nations to enter the inaugural World Cup held in Uruguay in 1930, but, 60 years later, they will travel to Italy still in search of their first major triumph in any senior international football tournament.

Excluding victory in the 1960 Olympics, they have succeeded in reaching the semi-finals of the World Cup twice (in 1930 and 1962), the final of the European Championship, in the days when it was the European Nations Cup, in 1960 and 1968, and winning hearts if not matches with their skilful and imaginative football.

Strangely, they remain an enigma – one of the most fertile cradles of talent, a nation capable of producing beguiling individuals and yet always among the also-rans. Indeed, since finishing fourth in 1962, Yugoslavia have qualified for the finals only twice – in 1974, when they were eliminated in the second round, and 1982, when they went after the first. Hardly the record of a nation so often dubbed the 'Brazil of Europe.'

This time, however, there is a genuinely-held felling that the current squad, emphatic winners of a qualifying group which included such similarly illustrious nations as Scotland and France, as well as Norway and Cyprus, can at least emulate the achievements of the 1930 and 1962 teams by reaching the last four.

Playing in a framework inspired by modern tactics, this'new' Yugoslavia could even go better than that if manager Ivica Osim manages to weld steely determination, the necessary mental toughness and team spirit into a squad of abundant skill and rare tactical awareness and flixibility.

Osim a professor of mathematics and a former goalscoring inside-forward who has played in France, took charge of the team in 1986, but runs the squad and team in tandem, in theory at least, with his predecessor Miljan Miljanic, who has been given the title of technical director by the Yugoslav Association and retains an influence over events at the national level.

Like Miljanic before him, Osim has found himself too often bedevilled by the departures of his best players abroad and the need to keep on rebuilding his squad. In 1989 alone, a reported 15 players with international honours at one level or another were exported from Yugoslavia. In the last 18 years, with Osim included among them, a total of more than 450 players have moved to play in the richer professional leagues of western Europe.

As if these problems were not enough, Yugoslavia faces further problems of its own making by being comprised of six autonomous federal republics with a diversity of cultures, races, religions and languages and, extraordinarily, two different alphabets. Add to those, the compulsory one year's military service each footballer has to serve, and it is not difficult to see why administration of the national side is not without its difficulties.

Nevertheless, Yugoslavia has consistently produced a flow of brilliant footballers and it is these players, as proven by their victory in the FIFA World Youth Championship of 1987 in Chile, who have maintained their country's reputation for skill. Indeed, by reputation, Yugoslavia are always judged to be one of the most dangerous and consistent sides in Europe.

This reputation has not changed under Osim whose elevation to the manager's job followed a typical compromise agreement among the regional federations and the Yugoslav FA after Miljanic, the former manager of Red Star Belgrade and Real Madrid, had originally been given the job again.

Osim took charge for the first time on October 29, 1986, against Turkey and marked his take-over with a 4-0 win. It was the start of a new era, but for Osim one which almost stalled when England visited Belgrade and won 4-1 in a crucial European Championship qualifying fixture. He survived, however, by pinning his faith on the experience and skill of his exported stars as he moulded a new and exciting team for the World Cup qualifiers.

Captain Hadzibegic – experienced.

CHASING TITLE THROUGH

BY TIMOTHY COLLINS

In these, a 3-2 home win over France and a 4-0 crushing of Cyprus sent them on their way after they had started with a 1-1 draw in Scotland. When the Scots were well beaten, 3-1, in the return in Belgrade, it was clear that the Yugoslavs were the outstanding team in the group and among the finest in Europe.

Temperament remained a problem for Osim, however, and this was shown again when they were beaten at Wembley by England in December in a fixture they appeared to treat as little more than a Christmas shopping outing.

Osim's team is the classic blend of experience and young, including the celebrated skills of Safet Susic, who will be 35 in April, Milan Jankovic, 30, Faruk Hadzibegic, 33, and Zlatko Vujovic, 31, with the brilliant 25-year-old Dragan Stojkovic and his 21-year-old Red Star Belgrade team-mate and fellow-midfielder Robert Prosinecki. Such is the wealth of talent, particulary in midfield, available to Osim, it is likely he will play with a five or even six-man midfield and only one player up front.

This will leave veteran captain Hadzibegic to marshall a defence made up of two markers and a libero, probably Zoran Vulic, who will have the unenviable task of ensuring none of the men ahead of them fail to heed their defensive responsibilities. In the group games against the United Arab Emirates and Colombia, it is unlikely to be too severley tested and even the West Germans, notoriously slow starters in major touraments, may not cause too many problems. But it is a system which requires great diligence and tenacity and it will be upon these qualifities that the Yugoslav dream of Italia '90 will be most thoroughly examined.

Cannes-based striker Zlatko Vujovic.

THE MANAGER

Ivica OSIM. Aged 48 (born May 6, 1941). A professor of mathematics who was capable of slide-rule passing as an international class inside-forward. He made more than 450 appearances for his first club Zeljeznicar of Sarajevo and collected 20 international caps, scoring five goals. He went on to play for a string of French clubs before returning home to manage Zeljeznicar. He took over as Yugoslavia's national team coach in 1986 after much experience including tours of the world as a coaching instructor for FIFA.

THE SQUAD

Tomislav IVKOVIC. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born August 11, 1960) with 22 caps. Sporting Lisbon. After making all three of his first international appearances as a substitute, Ivkovic has gone on to establish himself as the first-choice goalkeeper for Osim. A widely-travelled and experienced player, he began with Dinamo Zagreb and made his way to Portugal via spells with Red Star Belgrade and a period in Austria with FC Tirol of Innsbruck.

Fahrudin OMEROVIC. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born August 20, 1961) with two caps. Partizan Belgrade. A rarity among Yugoslav goalkeepers in that he has attracted talent scouts from western professional clubs, Omerovic is an experienced goalkeeper who has made more than 300 senior appearances since joining Partizan from Sloboda Tuzla in 1984 as a replacement for the Dinamo Zagreb-bound Ranko Stojic.

Predag SPASIC. Full-back. Aged 24 (born May 13, 1965) with 14 caps. Partizan Belgrade. One of the newcomers drafted into the squad by Osim, Spasic has impressed with his sharp tackling, all round defensive work and excellent acceleration and vision. He made his debut against Scotland last year and is expected to make an impression at the World Cup finals.

Vujadin STANOJKOVIC. Full-back. Aged 26 (born September 10, 1963) with 13 caps. Partizan Belgrade. Another Osim graduate who has attracted a lot of attention from west European clubs seeking a classy, skilful attacking full-back. Almost certain to take the right-back spot in the team.

Slobodan MAROVIC. Defender. Aged 26 (born August 13, 1964) with four caps. Red Star Belgrade.

Faruk HADZIBEGIC. Centre-back. Aged 33 (born October 7, 1956) with 41 caps. Sochaux. Captained the Yugoslavs at Wembley last December and showed his strength and experience in that match. A hardened veteran of life at the top, he made his international debut as long ago as 1982 against Norway in Oslo. He has played for Betis in Spain as well as in France for Sochaux since leaving Sarajevo three years ago.

Andrej PANADIC. Defender. Aged 31 (born March 9, 1959) with two caps. Dinamo Zagreb.

Budimur VUJACIC. Defender. Aged 26 (born Janaury 4, 1964) with four caps. Partizan Belgrade. Previously with Vojvodina. Full-back whose consistency with Vojvodina won him both a championship medal and a place in the Partizan team. Now established member of the defence.

Davor JOZIC. Defender. Aged 29 (born September 22, 1960) with 13 caps. Cesena. Sweeper or full-back with instinctive skills and a reputation as a hot-tempered player. He moved to Italy from Sarajevo and made his debut in Serie A playing for Cesena against Diego Maradona's Napoli. Born Knojic.

Mirsad BALJIC. Defender. Aged 28 (born March 4, 1962) with 26 caps. Sion.

YUGOSLAVIA

CONTINUED

Srecko KATANEC. Defender. Aged 26 (born July 16, 1963) with 24 caps. Sampdoria. An experienced member of the defence, Katanec began his career with Olimpia Ljubijana and joined Sampdoria via spells with Partizan Belgrade and Stuttgart in West Germany. A centre-back or defensive midfielder, he made his international debut against France in Zagreb in 1983 and was a member of the Yugoslav team which finished third in the 1984 Olympics.

Dragolmjub BRNOVIC. Midfielder. Aged 26 (born November 2, 1963) with 16 caps. Partizan Belgrade. A quick and intelligent midfield player, Brnovic won his place in the full international side when he was called in as a late reserve because of an injury crisis against Northern Ireland in the qualifiers for the last European championship. He did well and has stayed in, mostly on the left of midfield, ever since.

Milan JANKOVIC. Midfielder. Aged 30 (born December 13, 1959) with 12 caps. Anderlecht. Formerly with Real Madrid and Red Star Belgrade, Jankovic has never quite realised the potential he showed as a younger player before leaving Yugoslavia. An attacking midfielder with great skill, he made his international debut against Brazil in Recife in 1987. Playing against Madrid he impressed so much, they signed him immediately, but he was soon moved on to Belgium.

Safet SUSIC. Midfielder. Aged 34 (born April 13, 1955) with 43 caps. Paris Saint Germain. One of the great Yugoslav forwards of recent years, he took French citizenship in 1988 but retained his eligility for Yugoslavia through the sort of rules only world football can understand. Had been in the wilderness when recalled by Osim to help in vital win over France, scoring two and making one, and inspire the run to Italy.

Zvonimir BOBAN. Midfielder. Aged 20 (born October 8, 1969) with three caps. Dinamo Zagreb.

Davor SUKER. Midfielder. Aged 32 (born January 1, 1958) with no caps. Dinamo Zagreb.

Dragan STOJKOVIC. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born March 3, 1965) with 28 caps. Red Star Belgrade. A creative goalscoring star with a big reputation, Stojkovic is expected to move from Belgrade to Marseille for a huge fee after the finals. One of Osim's finest players, a Serb, he first played for Radnicki when only 18 and quickly gained attention. Red Star moved in and signed him in 1986, reputedly for a set of floodlights. He immediately inspired Red Star's first title, in 1988, for four seasons and is now expected to command a £5 million fee for his move to the south of France.

Skoro was on target against England at Wembley.

Haris SKORO. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born September 2, 1962) with 15 caps. Torino. A slim, elegant ball-playing midfield general, Skoro scored the Yugoslavs' goal at Wembley after a penetrative run through the heart of the England defence. He began with Dinamo Zagreb before moving to Italy and he made his international debut as a second-half substitute against France in a World Cup qualifier in 1985.

Goran MILOJEVIC. Midfielder. Aged 26 (born December 6, 1964) with two caps. Partizan Belgrade.

Dejan SAVICEVIC. Forward. Aged 23 (born September 15, 1966) with 12 caps. Red Star Belgrade. A goalscoring schemer with great skill and pace, he has recently completed serving his one year's national service and made a full and successful return to football. He scored both of Red Star's goals in their 2-0 UEFA Cup win over Cologne in last autumn's third round.

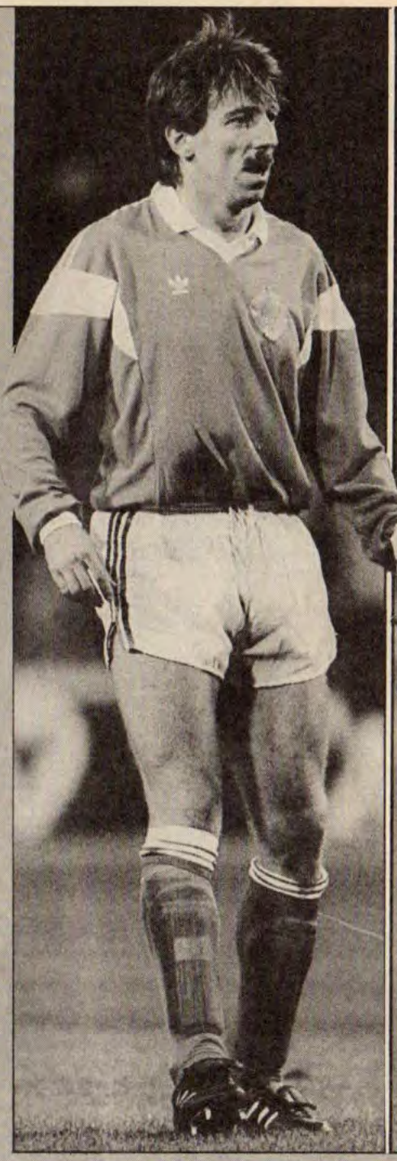
Robert PROSINECKI. Forward. Aged 21 (born January 12, 1969) with three caps. Red Star Belgrade. One of the most highly-rated young players in Europe, Prosinecki was voted player of the tournament at the 1987 World Youth Cup in Chile despite missing the final through suspension. A tremendous prospect.

Radmilo MIHAILOVIC. Forward. Aged 25 (born November 19, 1964) with six caps. Bayern Munich.

Borislav CVETKOVIC. Forward. Aged 27 (born September 30, 1962) with 11 caps. Ascoli.

Zlatko VUJOVIC. Forward. Aged 31 (born August 28, 1958) with 59 caps. Cannes. Centre-forward, goalscorer and twin brother of defender Zoran, Vujovic was the Yugoslavs top scorer in the 1982 qualifiers with seven goals. He made his debut in 1979 against Argentina but never really hit the very top of the international game. Joined Bordeaux in France in 1986 where he was a key figure in their 1987 double team and has since moved on to Cannes. Previously with Hajduk Split.

Zoran VULIC. Centre back/ defensive midfield. Aged 28 (born October 4, 1961) with nine caps. Hajduk Split. Former under-21 and Olympic international. Senior debut as a substitute in a 4-2 defeat by Brazil in Recife on April 30.



LEFT: Zoran Vulic will probably fill the sweeper role. ABOVE: Safet Susic has inspired the Yugoslavs' run to the Finals.

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ITALIA'90 WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

UAE

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Egypt	2	1	0	1	2	2
South Korea	3	0	1	2	3	5

Mubarak Ghanim Mubarak – Emirates inspiring captain.

ZAGALO STACKING WILL MAKE THE TASK EVEN TOUGHER

BY PAUL MOON

OF ALL the 24 World Cup finalists, the United Arab Emirates have the least impressive international pedigree. Before qualifying for Italy they had never seriously challenged for major honours in Asia and, even in Gulf competitions, they have long been in the shadows of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and even little Qatar.

The Emirates' soccer traditions pale when compared with the other 23 countries represented in the finals. It was not until the 1930s that local religious leaders ceased to frown on the game being played in what was then the Trucial States. Even after that important breakthrough, soccer had some way to go before achieving mass popularity.

As Britain was responsible for the Trucial States' defence and foreign policy from the middle of the 19th century up until independence and the modern state of the United Arab Emirates' formation in 1971, it is not surprising that civil servants and servicemen from the United Kingdom had the greatest influence in establishing soccer as the national game. RAF personnel at Sharjah are remembered with particular affection for their pioneering work.

And it was to Britain that the Emirates looked when, having tired of being the Gulf's poor relations, they commenced an ambitious and expensive development programme aimed at gaining a place among the elite of Asia.

Appointment

The first indication most soccer followers had that the game was actually played in the Emirates came in 1977 when, amidst much adverse publicity, England team manager Don Revie resigned from his post to accept a similar job in Dubai.

Before Revie's appointment, Pat Saward, who played for Millwall, Aston Villa, Huddersfield, Coventry and the Republic of Ireland and then managed Brighton, had done some sterling work in charge of the Al Nasr club, also in Dubai.

Unfortunately, results improved little during the Revie era but the late Yorkshireman can be credited for implementing a comprehensive youth development programme, the construction of modern facilities (previously sand pitches rolled with crude oil had to suffice) and introducing the national team to international soccer's mainstream (the World Cup, Olympics and Asian Cup were all entered for the first time in the early and mid 1980s).

Revie promoted a British style of play, however, and in 1984 the FA realised that the Brazilian mode, which Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar had already adopted with success, would suit their players better. Thus Carlos Alberto Perreira was recruited at £150,000 a year.

Since then all the Emirates' national sides have been loyal to traditional Brazilian virtues – patient build-up, short passing quick thrusts in to the opposing penalty areas and a great emphasis upon individaul ball skills.

Between 1984 and 1988 the Emirates regularly qualified for the finals of the major Asian tournaments, without ever being involved in the nitty gritty stage. On occasions, potential for greater things was displayed – most obviously during the 1986 World Cup qualifiers which saw the Emirates eliminate Asian Cup holders Saudi Arabia. They might even had avanced to the final four years ago had key player Ahmed Atiqa not died in a freak accident. While undergoing what should have been routine surgery to remove a bone fragment in the ankle, he suffered cardiac arrest and died on the operating table. Despite this, eventual finalists Iraq squeezed through only on the away goals rule a month later.

As the 1990 qualifying series loomed, most observers of the Asian game considered the Emirates far too naive and undisciplined to reach Italy. And that was doubtless the case before Mario Zagalo entered the scene.

Zagalo, three times a World Cup winner (as player is 1958 and 1962 and as manager in 1970) was appointed national coach in June 1988. His ability to infuse and maintain discipline and the tactical shrewdness were the major factors in the Emirates pipping the much higher-rated China, Qatar and Saudi Arabia during the final Asian World Cup qualifying series.

With uncanny effiency Zagalo devised exactly the right strategy to counter every opponent in turn in Singapore and his recent shock dismissal by the Emirates FA must seriously affect their prospects in June.

Midfielder Abdul Razaq Ibrahim.

Although successor Bernard Blaut has several years on the Polish FA coaching staff to his credit, he is still very much an unknown quantity and little time is available for him to gain the Emirates' players confidence and implement his own methods. The team he has inherited contains few outstanding players, even by Asian standards. Its cohesion, team spirit and tactical aptitude are the major reasons for the success achieved to date. If these are compromised, even to the smallest degree, the Emirates will have big problems.

With a relatively small population and faced by challenges from many equally ambitious countries, the Emirates are unlikely to remain at the forefront of Asian soccer for long and June may well prove a brief experience of the international limelight. Hopefully, recollections of the games against West Germany, Yugoslavia and Colombia will be savoured in the coming years, rather than recalled as a source of immense bitterness.

To return from Milan and Bologna without having suffered any humiliating defeats is the extent of the Emirates' aspirations. The accomplishment of that modest target could be predicted with much greater confidence were Zagalo still at the helm.

THE MANAGER

Bernard BLAUT. Aged 49. Succeeded Mario Zagalo as national manager after the Brazilian's shock dismissal in January. Blaut played 38 times at fullback for Poland between 1960 and 1971 during a club career with Odra Opole, army club Legia Warsaw (with whom he was twice Polish champion and twice Polish cup-winner) and then French club Metz. After retiring he joined the Polish national coaching staff and was assistant to Antoni Piechniczek at the 1982 and 1986 World Cup finals. His success in steering Sharjah to the UAE league title was a decisive step towards being appointed national coach.

THE PLAYERS

Abdul Qader HASSAN. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 with 18 caps. Al Shaba. Experienced international who had a long run in the team until Musabah's emergence forced him onto the substitutes' bench. Consistent, though far from inspiring, goalkeeper.

Muhsin MUSABAH. Goalkeeper. Aged 25 with 12 caps. Sharjah. Established his World Cup claim only in the middle of last year. His displays in the decisive qualifying section in Singapore prompted local reporters to nickname him 'Superman'. An acrobatic, spectacular performer but a little suspect on crosses.

Abel AMAS MUBARAK. Goalkeeper. Aged 23 with one cap. Al Wasl. New young keeper brought into the squad during the World Cup qualifiers when both senior men, Qader Hassan and Muhsin Musabah, were going through poor spells. Earned his chance after a string of sound league performances.

Khaleel Ghanim MUBARAK. Right back. Aged 25 with 25 caps. Al Khaleej. Dependable defender who began as a centre forward, was converted with success to midfield and switched to fullback, with even greater success, in emergency. Still likes to break forward regularly and effectively. He scored vital qualifying round goals against China and Qatar in Singapore.

Mohammed Obaid HELEL. Centre back. Aged 23 with 11 caps. Al Ain. A tenacious defender who was one of seven ever-presents in the Emirates' Singapore campaign. The most promising of Emirates defenders. Plays for one of the country's less fashionable clubs which, he considers, provided him with greater opportunities to shine.

Mubarak Ghanim MUBARAK. Centre back. Aged 27 with 35 caps. Al Khaleej. Inspirational team captain who specialises in man-to-man marking and reads the game exceptionally well. Also good in the air for an Emirates defender, a vital quality since manager Blaut is well aware of the problems European teams in particular can pose.

Abdul Rahmann Mohammed ABDULLA. Left back. Aged 27 with 19 caps. Al Nasr. Experienced fullback or midfielder whose role as a ball-winner was vital in the Singapore World Cup deciders. He has played on both right and left flank of defence for his clubs as well as at sweeper and stopper. Likes to attack.

Abdul Rahman AL HADDAD. Defender. Aged 25 with six caps. Sharjah. A major factor in Sharjah's league championship success last year. With the national team has been generally kept in reserve – chosen as much for his versatility as his strength in the tackle and speed on the turn. Lost his place originally through bad luck with injuries.

Salim RABEEA. Defender. Aged 23 with four caps. Al Nasr. Another new defender who was originally discovered as a teenager by the then Nasr manager, Pat Saward, the former Aston Villa and Irish international wing half.

Yousef HUSSAIN. Defender. Aged 25 with five caps. Al Ain. First came to prominence in Emirates football after making his first division debut as a teenager during Al Ain's championship season of 1983-84.

Ibrahim MEER. Defender. Aged 23 with 17 caps. Sharjah. Another ever-present in Singapore who has a reputation for his power in the tackle. Quick fullback who hopes that brother Eica may also squeeze into the World Cup squad at the last moment so that their twins understanding can be put to practical use.

Eisa Meer Abdul NOUR. Defender. Aged 22 with four caps. Sharjah. An enthusiastic utility defender whose club form last year won a call-up for national team duty. Sat on the subs' bench in all the Emirates' games in Singapore.

Adnan Al TALYANI. Midfield. Aged 26 with 23 caps. Al Shaba. Emerged as a player of real quality during the 1984 Asian Cup and has been a key figure in Emirates' sides ever since. Equally dangerous on either wing or in a central striking role. A free kick specialist, Talyani also proved in the qualifiers that he can score vital goals.

Abdul Razaq IBRAHIM. Midfield. Aged 23 with 14 caps. Al Ahly. An attacking midfielder whose inconsistent form has seen him constantly shifting in and out of the national team. Nevertheless, he was one of the Emirates' top scorers in the World Cup qualifying rounds, albeit with 'only' three goals. Dangerous at free kicks and with long-range shots.

Ali Thanijuma EL EHAWI. Midfield or attack. Aged 21 with one cap. Sharjah. Can play with equal facility in midfield or attack. Often used as a tactical substitute.

Nasser Khamis MUBARAK. Midfield. Aged 25 with 21 caps. Al Wasl. Energetic midfield ball-winner who was twice cautioned in Singapore and was thus responsible for the Emirates finishing bottom of the tournament's Fair Play table. Zagalo had considered him the most likely to move abroad after the finals.

Fahad Khamis MUBARAK. Midfield. Aged 22 with 27 caps. At Wasl. Prolific marksman in Gulf football but who fell out of favour with Zagalo midway through the World Cup qualifying campaign and played in only two games in the decisive last stage in Singapore. First earned a reputation as the Emirates' three-goal top scorer in their unsuccessful World Cup qualifying campaign for the 1986 Mexico World Cup.

Abdulla Sultan AHMED. Midfield. Aged 26 with 11 caps. Al Ahly. Fitness problems have restricted his international opportunities. Set a record in the 1984 domestic season when he was top scorer with 20 goals, a total which earned him the extra prestige of the Arab Golden Boot award.

Hassan Al SHAIBANI. Midfield. Aged 25 with ten caps. Al Wasl. One of the most influential midfielders in the domestic game but who has rarely reproduced club form at international level.

Fahad Hassan AL NUWAIS. Forward. Aged 23 with ten caps. Al Jazeira. An efficient and effective striker in domestic football who was first drafted into the squad last year in time for the World Cup qualifying series. His form then faded and he was perhaps lucky even to stay on the bench.

Fahad ABDUL RAHMAN. Forward. Aged 28 with 29 caps. Al Wasl. Experienced but erratic attacker who began as a winger and can also play in midfield. Boasts an outstanding technique, even by Middle East standards, which should prove invaluable at the World Cup finals.

Abdul Aziz KHADOR MOHAMMED. Forward. Aged 24 with 14 caps. Sharjah. In and out of the national side over the past two years. One of the exceptions to the rule, a player who was converted into an attacker after beginning his first division career in midfield. Dangerous with corners.

Hussain GHULOOM ALI. Forward. Aged 21 with eight caps. Sharjah. The 'find' of the 1989 domestic season. He played two games in Singapore and looked a player of exceptional promise. At 21 the 'baby' of the squad.

Zuhair Bakheet SAEED. Forward. Aged 23 with 17 caps. Al Wasl. Came to prominence in 1988 when he was the joint top scorer in the Gulf Tournament and top scorer in the UAE league. He can play either as a deep-lying winger or as striker. Injury ruled him out of all but the first game in Singapore.

ITALIA'90
WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

COLOMBIA

MATURANA PROMOTE WANTS TO A NEW IMAGE

BY KEITH SMITH

COLOMBIA – record of matches against the other finalists.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Argentina	13	4	0	9	12	41
Brazil	15	1	2	12	7	44
England	2	0	1	1	1	5
Scotland	1	0	1	0	0	0
South Korea	1	0	0	1	2	5
Soviet Union	2	0	1	1	5	7
Spain	1	0	1	0	1	1
United States	3	2	0	1	3	1
Uruguay	20	5	6	9	17	28
Yugoslavia	2	0	0	2	0	6

Andreas Escobar – defender who is effective in the air coming forward.

FOUR years on from a World Cup that they were once supposed to have hosted, Colombia have eventually qualified for the final stages – for the first time in twenty eight years. Not only is the 1990 version of the side better than the 1986 version would have been, but is one of the best ever and is naturally expected to better the only previous apperance, in Chile, where one point was gained from three games

Over the last four years, there have been fundamental changes on both the playing and management fronts. Only one player, Arnoldo Iguaran, has survived from the opening qualifying matches of the 1986 World Cup and only three other players in the squad (Carlos Valderrama, Carlos Mario Hoyos and Gilardo Gomez) have been capped prior to 1987.

Responsible for coaching a new generation of players has been a relatively young coach, Francisco Maturana, aged thirty eight when he succeeded Gabriel Ochoa Uribe in 1987.

Overall, the side do not have much of a history to live up to. Colombia have never won the Coopa America (although they were runners up in 1975) and did not enter the World Cup until the 1958 competition.

In Colombia, club football has always come first, until very recently. This has been reflected by the large numbers of expensive imports who have played in Colombia. One of the first was Adolfo Pedernera, a forward from Argentina's River Plate. Others, like Alfredo Di Stefano, followed, but by the mid 1950's they had almost all gone.

Victory

Pedernera stayed and became Colombian coach for the 1962 World Cup qualifying competition. Ecuador dropped out as prospective opponents, leaving Colombia to defeat Peru on aggregate (2-1), enough to earn a place in the finals. Once in Chile they lost to Uruguay (2-1) and Yugoslavia (5-0). In between they drew 4-4 with the Soviet Union, scoring three goals in the final 22 minutes.

Until now, Colombia had only come close to qualifying again once, in 1973. In that series Uruguay triumphed on goal difference, despite a 1-0 Colombian victory in Montevideo.

All three of Colombia's goals in that competition wsere scored by Willington Ortiz, the outstanding Colombian talent, and inspiration, of his generation. As a 22-year-old, Ortiz appeared in the America versus Europe friendly in Barcelona in 1973, the only Colombian representative in such exalted company.

He never played in Europe – his career starting with Millonarios, Deportivo Cali and finally America Cali – and was therefore practically unknown outside of South America. The fact that Colombian sides were not very successful did not help either (the first Colombian victory at an international level coming when the youth side won the South American championships, in 1987). Ortiz officially retired last year, but played his final interantional against Paraquay in a World Cup game in 1985. Paraquay won on aggregate, and went on to play in Mexico, but Colombia won the game 2-1, Ortiz scoring the winner in the final minute.

Making his full debut that day was Ortiz's heir apparent, Carlos Valderrama. At the moment, Willington Ortiz is coaching youth footballers in the Cali region.

With 1987 came a new coach, and a new influx of players. Coach Maturana introduced new talent such as Rene Higuita, Luis Carlos Perea, Leonel Alvarez and Bernardo Redin, as well as a new style. The introduction of the short passing game is still a novely to most clubs at domestic level, where teams usually don't have the talent or the technique to play that sort of style.

It has been generally welcomed though as an attempt to play a more naturally Colombian type of game, rather than trying to adfapt to the styles of Argentina or Europe which had not brought any success internationally.

In the past three years, Colombia have finished third in the Copa America (in 1987) and survived the toughest qualifying group in South America plus two games with Israel to reach Italy.

At club level Nacional from Medellin (with much of the Colombian squad and all of its management) last year did what no Colombian side had been able to do in 30 years, win the Copa Libertadores. Not only was it a victory in a competition where the Willington Ortiz inspired America Cali had lost in the final three years running in the mid 1980's, but it also silenced those who had regarded Maturana's sides as being pleasant to watch, but not good at winning things.

The strength of Colombian football has always been home advantage, Colombia have not lost a major international at home since 1985 when they were beaten by Argentina. Away from home, performances have usually been less than awe inspiring but recently results have started to improve away from the friendly confines of Bogota, Cali and Barranquilla.

Footsteps

In 1987 they won in Argentina, and have lost just three times in the past 2 1/2 years outside of Colombia – including draws in England, Brazil and Uruguay.

Key players are now much more likely to come to Europe following in the footsteps of Ernesto Diaz, an international forward who briefly came to Europe in the late 1970's and Valderrama in 1988.

The hope in Colombia is that more valuable experience will be gained in Europe than in a Colombian league that is dominated by a few big clubs, and that experience from abroad will help continue the recent upturn in fortunes. There is also the added incentive to show the good side of Colombian football, and of Colombia in general – as opposed to the well publicised problems with drug money and shootings. This will apply to the team when they reach Italy.

The suspension of the Colombian league in November 1989 has been more of a blow to the individual clubs than to Francisco Maturana. For the Clubs it meant the cancellation of the tournament at the only part of the season when crowds in excess of 20,000 bother to attend regularly.

The 1990 team was due to start in March, though even if it does not it may allow some of the Colombian squad the sort of break the usual 60 game, ten month season does not allow.

In any case preparations started in Mid January through until mid-February, including some games in the United States. Final training starts in April, with a tour of Europe planned for May.

Last year the squad spent four months together in and around Medellin with Maturana and his staff, and was the best prepared side Colombia has ever put out.

By June, the current squad will hope to be nearing that state, by which time Maturana will have hoped to solve some of his difficulties on the pitch. One is finding a partner for Arnoldo Iguaran to pep up an attack that can be short of a few ideas at times. The other is helping Carlos Valderrama re-discover his form of 1987/88.

In short, the Colombians still lack experience (especailly compared with the other three South American sides), may have problems up front if Iguaran is injured and are relying on finding good surfaces in Italy, the passing game will disintegrate without them.

However, they are a talented team, with a good playing record over the past three years, perfectly capable of progressing into the knockout rounds, from where anything might happen, Neither West Germany nor Yugoslavia can afford to take them lightly.

Colombia's main hope of success in Italy lies with Carlos Valderrama.

Alexis Garcia

THE MANAGER

Francisco MATURANA. Aged 41. Born in Quibdochoco in the west of Colombia. A former international centre-half, he spent the majority of his playing career with Nacional of Medellin, where he won three championships. Subsequently moved to Tolima and finally Bucaramanaga. He wanted to retire completely from the game in 1983 but was persuaded to coach Nacional's youth side by Luis Cubilla, then Nacional's coach. Moved into senior coaching with Cristal Caldas in 1986, his success there leading to both Nacional and Colombia jobs in 1987. A phlegmatic character who has encouraged his sides to play in an attractive manner, despite being player under Osvaldo Zubeldia, who guided Nacional until 1982 and the notorious Estudiantes de Plata side in the late 1960's. Awarded the national order of merit for sport in November 1989 for guiding Nacional to success and Colombia to Italy. Turned professional as a 24 year old, having studied Dentistry at the University of Antioquia.

Carlos Mario Hoyos is another defender who loves to get forward.

ABOVE: Defender Perea.
BELOW: Perez – hardworking midfielder.

ABOVE: Goalkeeper Rene Higuita's exploits outside his area are sure to make him one of the most colourful characters in the finals. ABOVE RIGHT: Arnolda Iguaran is the most experienced member of the squad.

COLOMBIA

CONTINUED

THE SQUAD

Rene HIGUITA. Goalkeeper. Aged 23 (born August 27, 1966) with 27 caps. Nacional. Will be one of the most talked about players at the World Cup, as much for his cavalier style as for his goalkeeping. Played in the 1985 World Youth Cup in the Soviet Union, where Colombia reached the last eight before losing 6-0 to Brazil, before turning professional with Millonarios later the same year. Moved to Nacional in 1986, where he has developed into his country's undisputed number one. Has played in midfield for Nacional and is Colombia's penalty taker.

Eduardo NINO. Goalkeeper.Aged 22 (born August 8, 1967) with two caps. Santa Fe. Has served as backup to Higuita for over two years. A major contributor to Colombia's 1987 South American youth championship win, he is less of a showman than Higuita but is sold and capable. Santa Fe have been his only club.

Wilson PEREZ. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 6, 1967) with 16 caps. Atletico Junior. Another member of the 1987 youth side. An overlapping full-back who turned professional in 1987 with Junior and replaced Luis 'chonto' Herrerea as Colombia's right back in 1989.

Leon VILLA. Defender. Aged 30 (born January 12, 1960) with five caps. Nacional. Eventually made his full international debut in 1989 having made his first international appearance in Maturana's first selection, an Olympic qualifying game against Peru in April 1987. Previously with (Independiente) Medellin.

Giovanni CASSIANA. Defender. Aged 20 (born January 10, 1970). Uncapped. Nacional. Appeared in the 1989 World Youth Cup for Colombia in Saudi Arabia. Progressed well during the ill fated 1989 season earning a call up to the national squad in August 1989. Confirmed his promise against Milan in the World Club cup.

Carlos Mario HOYOS. Defender. Aged 28 (born February 28, 1962) with 22 caps. Deportivo Cali. An experienced defender who likes to get forward. Has been a professional for seven seasons with Cali, although he spent the last portion of the 1989 season on loan to Junior, who were unable to raise enough cash for a proposed transfer.

Gilardo GOMEZ. Defender. Aged 25 (born 17, 1964) with two caps. Nacional. Began his career with Medellin in 1984, and was capped at the tender age of nineteen later that year. Transferred to Millonarios before joining Nacional in 1988. An adaptable full-back.

Alexis MENDOZA. Defender. Aged 28 born November 8, 1961) with five caps. AC Junior. A dependable cetnre half, strong and straightforward, who has not let the side down when called to deputise in defence. Has played for only Junior.

Andres ESCOBAR. Defender. Aged 22 (born March 13, 1967) with 21 caps. FC Zurich. Travelled to play in Switzerland in January. An intelligent defender, he turned professional three years ago with Nacional, following an older brother Eusebio who played for Millonarios and Cali. His full debut for Colombia came in 1988, he is effective in the air, as demonstrated by his near post header against England at Wembley in May 1988.

Luis Carlos PEREA. Defender. Aged 26 (born December 29, 1963) with 24 caps. Nacional. Previously with Medellin, with whom he turned professional following the South American youth championships of 1983. Strong and confident on the ball he was Nacional's major absentee against Milan, the result of a training ground accident. Has been sidelined since the knee trouble returned in Israel.

Mario COLL. Midfield. Aged29 (born August 20, 1960) with three caps. America. Signed by America in 1988 from Junio, his international debut coming in 1987. Usually expected to perform a containing role in midfield, his father Marcos Coll played and scored in the 1962 Finals.

Leonel ALVAREZ. Midfield. Aged 24 (born July 29, 1965) with 26 caps. Nacional. Colombia's most versatile player in midfield, where is is expected to distribute the ball and then help out in attack and de3fence where necessary. A former youth international who started his career with Medellin before moving to Nacional in 1987. Invited for trials with English club Derby.

Gabriel Jaime GOMEZ. Midfield. Aged 30 (born December 8, 1959) with 11 caps. Independiente. A defensive midfielder with a powerful shot, used decisively to help Colombia defeat SArgentina in Buenos Aires in 1987. Previously with Millonarios and Nacional.

Gustavo RESTREPO. Midfleid. Aged 20 (born September 24, 1969). Uncapped. Nacional. 1989 was his first year as a professional. Represented Colomiba in the World Youth Cup in Saudi Arabia last February.

Wilmer CABREREA. Midfield. Aged 22 (born September 15, 1967) with two caps. Santa Fe. Another former youth international. A professional since 1987, he played well enough for his Bogota club side to be called up into the international squad for the first time, for last season's Copa America. An attacking mid-fielder.

Freddy RINCON. Midfield. Aged 23 (born August 14, 1966). Uncapped. America. Originally spotted by Santa Fe playing non-league football wityh Atletico Buenaventura. Always comfortable on the ball, he prefers to play on the right side of midfield. Signed by America in 1989.

Alexis GARCIA. Midfield. Aged 29 (born July 21, 1960) with II caps. Nacional. An unspectacular but hardworking and consistant midfielder. Previously coached by Francisco Maturana at Cristal Caldas.

Carlos VALDERRAMA. Midfield. Aged 28 (born September 2, 1961) with 24 caps. Montpelier. Voted as South America's outstanding player in 1987 following a superb Copa America that year. In 1988 he became Colombia's first major footballing export to Europe when he signed for Montpelier, since when he has struggled to find his true form. 'El pibe' (the little boy) originally turned professional in 1981 with his hometown team, Union Magdelena. In 1984 he signed for an unproductive year with Millonarios before joining Deportiveo Cali in 1985. Team captain and still a central figure for Colombia. Made his debut for Colombia in 1985.

Bernardo REDIN. Midfield. Aged 27 (born February 26, 1963) with 25 caps. Deportiveo Cali. An attacking midfielder who, in partnership with Valderrama, inspired club and country to their most successful periods in over a decade. Has a stinging shot from outside the penalty area and is generally Colombia's most dangerous midfielder. 1989 was a disappointing year, with a loss of form due to injuries and difficulties with his club, but like Valderrama he is a great talent.

Ricardo PEREZ. Midfield. Aged 26 (born October 24, 1963) with eight caps. Nacional. Joined Caldas as a professional in 1984, moving to Nacional in 1987. His full international debut came in the 1987 Copa America, but missed a large chunk of 1989 through injury. A hardworking defensive midfielder.

Bernardo Redin possesses a stinging shot

John Jairo DIAZ. Forward. Aged 23 (born August 23, 1966). Upcapped. Millonarios. A professional with Millonarios since 1987, although he has only become a regular with the Bogota club in the last six months. A former youth international.

Miguel GUERRERO. Forward. Aged 22 (born September 7, 1967). Uncapped. America. Like Diaz, a former youth international who turned professional in 1987. He established himself with America during 1989.

Arnolda IGUARAN. Forward. Aged 33 (born January 18, 1957) with 43 caps. The most experienced player in the squad. A professional since 1978, he played in the 1979 Copa America. A surprising omission from the Colombian squad for the 1982 World Cup games, he moved in 1982 from Cucuta to Tachira, Venezuela. Unhappy, he returned to Tolima six months later. in 1983 he signed on loan for Santa Fe before signing with their arch rivals Millonarios. Indispensible up front for Colombia he is dangerous both in the air and on the ground.

Ruben Dario HERNANDEZ. Forward. Aged 25 (born February 19, 1965) with 12 caps. A natural left winger in his second spell with Millonarios. Previously with Quindio and Caldas. An elusive runner who has formed a good partnership with Iguaran and Estrada.

Carlos Enrique ESTRADA. Forward. Aged 28 (born November 1, 1961) with two caps. Hails from the same town as Willington Ortiz. A talented but hot tempered striker currently banned from international competition for a year following an after the game incident in a Libertadores Cup tie. Previously with Cali. Will be available for Italy, if selected.

John Jairo TRELLEZ. Forward. Aged 22 (born April 29, 1968) with 11 caps. Zurich. Appeared in two South American youth championships before turning professional in 1987. Made his debut for Colombia in 1987. A good goalscorer at club level and expected to be Colombia's main striker into the 1990's. Signed for Swiss second division side Zurich in January.

Albeiro USURIAGA. Forward. Aged 23 (born June 12, 1966) with seven caps. Came from almost nowhere to become a national hero in 1989, with 7 Libertadores Cup goals and the winner against Israel. Originally with America he played for Tolima and Cucuta on loan before joining Nacional on loan in 1989, in preference to Junio. May soon return to America.

EUROPEAN SHOWDOWN

1992 European Championship Draw

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Spain	Rumania	Italy	Yugoslavia
Czechoslovakia	Scotland	Soviet Union	Denmark
France	Bulgaria	Hungary	Austria
Iceland	Switzerland	Norway	N. Ireland
Albania	San Marino	Cyprus	Faroe Islands

Group 5	Group 6	Group 7
West Germany	Netherlands	England
Belgium	Portugal	Rep. of Ireland
East Germany	Greece	Poland
Wales	Finland	Turkey
Luxembourg	Malta	

Looks good for Holland, tough for the Soviets

STOCKHOLM Town Hall was the venue for the 1992 European Championship draw which was brimful with intrigue and given a novel twist by the inclusion for the first time of two genuine cinderella nations – the Faroe Islands and San Marino.

So, with 34 aspirants to the crown currently held by Holland, all but one of the seven groups contain five nations and, unlike the World Cup qualifying competition there is not the cushion of qualifying in second place.

Holland appear to have been given one of the less difficult groups. Greece, Finland and Malta are unlikely to offer too many obstacles, and even the presence of the infuriatingly inconsistent Portuguese does not suggest that Holland will not be in Sweden to defend their crown.

The same cannot be said of the Soviet Union who will not relish two matches with Italy, whom they beat in the 1988 semi-finals. There are few easy touches at international level and Hungary, Norway and Cyprus who make up the numbers in this group all seem capable of depriving even the most illustrious visitors of vital away points.

Another former runner-up, Spain, have been drawn in what appears to be an even tougher group, which includes their conqueror of that 1984 final, France, and the much improved Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the section is made up by two of Europe's more respected and troublesome minnows, Albania and Iceland.

Spain have a fine record in major championship qualifying groups but will confront a French side which has shown signs recently of a minor revival under a much-criticised Michel Platini. Iceland are Europe's most admirable small nation and though they are unlikely to qualify they seem certain to play a major role in determining the outcome of what is the most evenly balanced group.

The home nations enjoyed mixed fortunes, though England's advantage in being drawn in the only four-team group harshened by the feeling of deja vu when the Republic of Ireland, Poland and Turkley, three names only too familiar to manager Bobby Robson emerged as the stumbling blocks between another finals appearance.

The 1992 European Championship draw is revealed.

PREVIEWS FROM IAIN MACLEOD

Familiarity, it is said, breeds contempt but, with the World Cup finals – where England and Ireland meet in the opening group F match – still to come, success and failure at the premier competition leads to an inevitable backlash in the autumn stage of the European qualifying competition.

So, it is too early to make even short-term judgements. Nonetheless, for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the bid to qualify as the winners of a five-team group containing some notable names is likely to be fraught with problems.

Of the three, Scotland have much the better chance, Two trips behind the disintegrating Iron Curtain, to face Rumania and Bulgaria may not, in the current circumstances be an overly difficult task. Switzerland and tiny San Marino make up the numbers and even allowing for Scotland's vulnerability against the minnows they may never have a better chance to qualify for the European finals.

Northern Ireland have been less fortunate, though the lack of a grass pitch in the Faroe Islands ensure that the North Atlantic outfit will make their "home" debut somewhere in neutral Sweden, where they are likely to play all their home games.

The novelty value of that encounter will not blind the Irish to the real task confronting them: Denmark, Austria and Yugoslavia seem certain to cause untold problems for a side who are but a shadow of that which enchanted the world as recently as the mid-1980s.

Wales, though, have drawn the shortest straw of all and will take little comfort from the visits of East and West Germany, and Belgium. The pairing of the two Germanies is much the most intriguing aspect of the draw and is likely to force the cancellation of their projected friendly in Leipzig on August 29.

Such is the pace of change at present that fusion of the two Germanies seems inevitable, perhaps even by 1992, though UEFA have said that this will not affect the group. Whatever happens in Bonn and Berlin East and West Germany will play each other at least twice more in international competition.

EUROPEAN CLUB QUARTER-FINALS

CHAMPIONS' CUP

CFKA v Marseille
Mechelen v Milan
Bayern Munich v PSV Eindhoven
Benfica v Dnepr

CUP-WINNERS'CUP

Sampdoria v Grasshoppers
Valladolid v Monaco
Unirea Tricolor v Partizan
Anderlecht v Admira

UEFA CUP

Fiorentina v Auxerre
Koln v Antwerp
FC Liege v Werder Bremen
Hamburg v Juventus
(Ties on March 7 and 21)

CHAMPIONS' CUP

IF the Bayern Munich v PSV Eindhoven tie is the pick of the quarter final matches, there is an intriguing confrontation between Mechelen and holders, Milan which may transpire to be of a better quality than conventional wisdom suggests at present.

Mechelen, who dismissed Dutch coach Ruud Krol shortly before Christmas, remain in contention for the Belgian title, but have been less than impressive of late – a stark contrast to the Milanese, currently enjoying a tremendous revival on the domestic front.

Mechelen's defence, however, has been instrumental in their rise to prominence and, their tight-marking, close attention style of play – not dissimilar to Nacional of Colombia who caused Milan numerous problems in the world club final – is something Milan do not relish.

Ambitions

The first leg at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels – the first European match since the ill-fated 1985 European Cup final – holds the key to Mechelen's ambitions. Anything less than a single goal victory and their prospects at San Siro will be less than hopeful.

Milan, still without the injured Gullit have, nevertheless, risen above that notable handicap and providing they can run a tight ship in Brussels should progress to the semi-finals.

PSV, bidding to regain the trophy they won in 1988, suggested by their demolition of Steaua Bucharest in the second round that they have absorbed the loss of Ronald Koeman, and look a better proposition than had been forecast at the start of the season.

The lack of quality opposition on the domestic front has led to some inconsistency, though there is little doubt about their ability to regain the title. How they perform in Munich is crucial to their survival, though Bayern, hardly a model of consistency will have to show a marked improvement if they are to overcome the competition's second favourites.

PSV's defence did well in Bucharest, and with goals not a problem in the Philips stadium, coach Guus Hiddink, have quelled a minor players' revolt, will look forward to the tie with just a little more confidence than counterpart Jupp Heynckes.

There are those in Milan who believe that PSV represent the biggest obstacle to the retention of the trophy, and the Dutch champions seem marginal favourites for a semi-final place – and the possibility of a much-awaited confrontation with Europe's champion club.

Milan continue their defence of the European Cup against Mechelen.

Revival is a winner for Milan

Marseille's multi-millionaire chairman Bernard Tapie, is unlikely to concur with that assumption, preferring instead to cultivate the notion that the nation which gave birth to the trophy is set fair to win it for the first time.

Marseille's multi-national outfit have found it hard to stay with Bordeaux this season, though domestic form is rarely an accurate gauge for European prospects.

The visit to Sofia to play Bulgarian champions CFKA Sredets, is not to be taken for granted, though there is little to suggest that Marseilles will flounder. They survived a traumatic visit to Athens in the last round and they should come through without too many problems for a semi-final clash which is likely to provide more concrete evidence of just how good they really are.

Legendary

Benfica, one of the competition's legendary names will have to produce some goals at home if they are to survive the journey to the Soviet Union, for what is likely to be a difficult second leg against Dnepr – that country's first professional club.

Dnepr have little European pedigree and also have the additional handicap which traditionally confronts Eastern European clubs, of having to play a vital match virtually out of season. Benfica have no such problems and seem a good bet to clinch a place in the last four, though to expect anything more than that given the quality of some of their challengers is, at this stage, more a hankering for the good old days than a realistic assessment of Benfica's ability 28 years after they last won the world's most coveted club trophy.

CUP-WINNERS' CUP

TRADITIONALLY the weakest of the three European tournaments, only the presence of Belgian cup holders Anderlecht, twice winners of the competition back in the 1970s, gives substance to what is on balance a comparatively poor last eight.

Anderlecht are favourites to win this season's Recopa and although domestic form has been patchy, there is little likelihood of the Austrians, Admira Wacker, causing an upset at a crucial stage of the tournament.

There have been signs recently that Anderlecht's major problem might be over-confidence. Some shock defeats in the league have undermined the good work done earlier in the season, and the Brussels outfit need to exercise care that their season is not brought to a premature end.

Anderlecht's superior strike force of Degryse and Vanderlinden should provide the goals that ensure qualification. A good performance in the first leg at Parc Astrid should ease fears for the return in Vienna.

Monaco, possibly still without injured Glenn Hoddle, will have to be at their best to overcome the stiff challenge from the Spanish side Valladolid. Given the lack of quality in the Recopa, Monaco must hope for the kind of commitment they showed in East Berlin in an earlier round.

The Spaniards will display a physical side which may well disrupt Monaco's more silky rhythm – the fact that Valladolid are struggling in the lower regions of the Spanish first division should not lull the French into a false sense of security.

Potential

Monaco have not been overly impressive in France, though if they play to their potential they should come through perhaps by the slenderest of margins to give new African footballer of the year Georges Weah Wimm further cause for celebration.

Joining them in the semi-finals should be last year's beaten finalists, Sampdoria. Their opponents, the Swiss cup holders Grasshoppers Zurich are, to some extent, the surprise packet of this season's tournament, having salvaged victory from the jaws of defeat when they redressed a three-goal defeat against Slovan in Bratislava in the first round.

Their performance in Zurich and subsequent victory over the Soviet cup holders suggest that they will provide stiff opposition for an Italian side who demonstrated their quality with two fine performances against Borussia Dortmund in the last round.

The most intriguing pairing is of the two Eastern European sides, Partizan Belgrade and Dinamo Bucharest, the Rumanian side who have now taken the name of a pre-war club, Unirea Tricolor.

There was some doubt as to whether the former team of the state security apparatus would be allowed to participate under their new name, but UEFA have now given them clearance.

Partizan have been scoring freely home and away in earlier rounds and look much the better bet of the two for a place in the semi-finals.

UEFA CUP

THE surprise exits of last season's finalists, Napoli and Stuttgart, has given the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup a somewhat unexpected look. Mingling with the giants Juventus and Hamburg are some of Europe's less illustrious names such as Antwerp, Liege and Auxerre.

But it is the confrontation of the Italians and Germans, who contested the 1983 European Cup final which will be the focus of attention. Neither side is of the calibre of those halcyon days in their history and with domestic form fluctuating to the extent that honours are unlikely, European success is greatly cherished.

Juventus under Dino Zoff have not hit the heights in Calcio – a leaky defence and unrest among the foreign contingent contributing to the "old lady's" inability to capitalise on a relatively high striking rate.

Hamburg's problem s are not dissimilar: they have conceded an unhealthy average of a goal and half per game in the Bundesliga which does not auger well if the Germans lose an early goal at home, or are forced to chase the game in Turin. There is little to choose between the sides, though Juventus may just shade what is likely to be a close, hard-fought tie.

Prodigy

The other Italian representatives, Fiorentina, who boast the latest prodigy to boost the nation's World Cup hopes face surprise Auxerre in the knowledge that Robert Baggio whose penalty secured a fine victory over Dynamo Kiev in the last round will have to be at his best in a tie that is unlikely to yield many goals.

Auxerre, a middle of the table French side whose major asset is the gifted Belgian international Enzo Scifo, displayed little enthusiasm for attack when they beat Olympiakos courtesy of an away goal by the Hungarian, Kalman Kovacs, in the last round.

There is every reason to believe that defences will play the dominant role in this tie. Fiorentina have greater individual talent and if Baggio can provide more than a glimpse of the talent which had Italians in raptures not too long ago, the Florentine club should progress to a stage of European competition they have not been to since the 1960s.

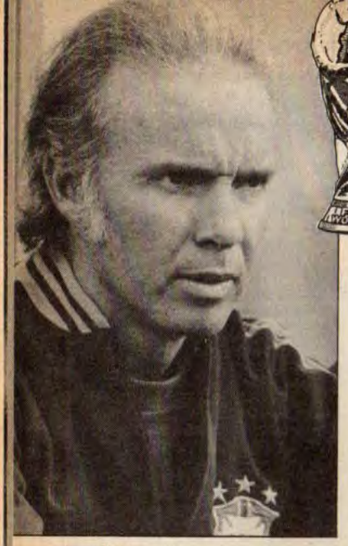
The form shown by West German clubs in this competition suggests that either Werder Bremen or Koln, or even both, could contest the final in May.

To even reach the penultimate stage, however, both clubs will have to overcome Belgian opposition – Werder travel to Liege while Koln entertain Antwerp.

The progress of the Belgian clubs has been one of the more remarkable aspects of this season's European competitions, particularly when one considers how close Antwerp came to losing to Vitosha in the second round.

That said, however, the positive side was the manner in which they dismissed Stuttgart – the performance away from home was of particular merit.

Liege seem to face the harder of the two ties. Werder Bremen's superb 8-3 aggregate triumph over Napoli being the highlight of a fine season.



GREAT PLAYERS AND GREAT MATCHES

ZAGALO: The cunning Brazilian Wolf

BY ERIC BATTY

THE working winger is no new phenomenon in football, and one of the best I ever saw, was one of the first. He was Zagalo, who has the unique distinction of being the only man in the world to have won the World Cup at two levels.

Only a few chosen ones have won the World Cup as a manager, which Zagalo did in 1970, with Brazil in Mexico, but he had earlier played at outside left for the successful Brazilian team in Sweden, in 1958. The Brazilian style of play in 1958, beating the home side, Sweden 5-2 in the final, won them a great many admirers. But Zagalo was not a player that stood out as a specially gifted player, looking as if he were in there to make up the number.

That Zagalo was an intelligent player is beyond dispute, highly intelligent. But experience as a player and intelligence do not naturally make a man a good coach. However, in the case of Zagalo, there is the unique 'extra' quality that makes him stand out as a working boss – even though he has now been ungraciously dismissed after taking the United Arab Emirates to the final stages of the 1990 World Cup.

Lucky

When the U.A.E., clinched their place in Italy, Zagalo, as manager, gave a press conference at which he said: "We owe our qualification to a little luck and a lot of hard work."

Hard work is the cornerstone of success for Zagalo, who is now 58, and earned 35 international caps for Brazil, including helping in winning the World Cup finals in 1958 and 1962.

He began as a hard-working inside left of all-round ability. In those blessed, far-off days, when football was still an entertainment for people who 'just wanted to watch a good game', every team had one. They also had an inside right, and the 'pair' as they were known, all had skill, with tricks of their own; they worked between the two penalty areas, and from time to time, got in timely tackles at their own end, as well as chipping in the odd goal at the other end.

I saw him play many times and cannot remember him ever doing much with his right foot. But how he worked.

Zagalo was a lucky man, even in Brazil, for he acquired two nicknames, one of which has led to confusion.

Many people think his 'given' name was Mario Jorge Zagalo Lobo, whereas in fact, the Lobo was his second nickname which he acquired after the World Cup of 1958, in which he scored a goal.

Zagalo began with America of Rio and turned professional for Flamengo. He worked so hard that he was tagged El Formiguinha, the Ant, but he was always eager to play for his country, and when Flam switched him to the left wing, because they had two good inside lefts, but no left winger of quality, Zagalo settled down, to work like a beaver.

In the 1958 World Cup, having helped Flamengo win the league championship in 1953, 1954 and 1955, he was in the pre-squad of 40 players. Then fortune smiled on him. The number one choice, Pepe, a colleague of Pele at Santos was badly injured, and then in training the second choice was hurt.

'El Lobo' (the Wolf) is reknowned for cunning, and this was the second nickname the Brazilian's fans applied to Zagalo. In the final, he worked up and down the left flank; defending and attacking in turn. He could chip up delicate crosses; take men on, or give and go to make a one-two, and above all he defended. Often Zagalo got round behind the left back, Nilton Santos.

On one outstanding occasion, Zagalo had dropped back, with Brazil leading only 2-1, and with the Brazilian defence cut apart and goalkeeper Gylmar beaten, Zagalo headed the ball out from under the Brazilian crossbar, to save a certain goal. Then in the second half he scored the fourth goal for Brazil.

In 1962 Zagalo retired, and began as trainer (coach), with the youth team of Botafogo. They were second in 1965, winners of their League in 1966, and in 1967 Botafogo offered Zagalo the chair of their manager, and they were winners of the Rio de Janeiro Cup in 1967, and champions a year later.

In 1969 Brazil qualified for the World Cup a year later, but in spite of all the talent at their disposal, their play was inconsistent in attack, and the defence was pathetic, with no understanding or order.

Zagalo was once more the right man, at the right time, in the right spot, and was invited to take over on January 1, 1970. He told me in Mexico that he realised it was too late to bring in new defenders, particularly a goalkeeper, so he set about creating some order out of the defensive chaos.

New System

Not for nothing had he acquired a new nickname O Dirigente, the Director, or manager, for he set about giving a new system, and his goalkeeper, Felix, some confidence. The team settled down, and realising where the strength of the team lay – in attack – the team was geared for attacking football.

Brazil had been playing 4-3-3, but Zagalo gave them a shape of his own with two attack-minded full backs; a libero, or sweeper, and a re-organised midfield. Zagalo had developed his own version of a working winger, and he asked Roberto Rivalino, to drop back from the left wing, work in midfield, and push up when Brazil had the ball. With Pele dropping back a little, and right winger Jairzinho, and centre forward Tostao up front, the shape as I saw it was a 1-3-3.5-2.5 system.

Above all, the authoritative, commanding voice of Zagalo assured and re-assured all the players. He made so few changes once he had settled his team, that even the defence improved enormously.

The Mundial of Mexico, 1970, was the last true festival of football. The heat and altitude of 8,000 feet above sea level, forced players to think more and run less, to use their brains and skill to conserve their energy. But Zagalo still stood by his own maxim – "attack at 85 miles an hour and when we lose the ball, sprint back to defend at 105 miles an hour."

The rest is history, with Brazil winning six games in succession to take the World Cup for the third time, and make it their own property. They beat the Czechs 4-1, England 1-0, Romania 3-2, then showed their versatility in a football of attack, they won their quarter final with Peru by 4-2, and a bruising, battling semi-final with Uruguay 3-1. The final was a classic, won 4-1 against Italy.

Zagalo has spent the last ten years working mostly in the Middle East, where his deep knowledge of the game impresses both officials, wealthy sheiks, and players alike. He is no manager bound to his office chair on the phone cooking up transfer deals, and picking the team for matches. His is a world in which he goes out every day to train with his players, and persuade and bully them into playing the way he wants.

Zagalo strikes for Brazil in their 5-2 win over Sweden in the 1958 World Cup Final.

Johan Neeskens bangs home a first minute penalty for the Dutch.

WM 74

1974 World Cup Final

W.GERMANY 2 HOLLAND 1

THE West Germans were always the favourites to win the title, at home, just as England had done eight years earlier. Playing at home gives everyone an edge, and the best teams amongst the world elite, have always been winners on their own soil.

But this time there was an exciting new challenger from an unexpected quarter. When those old enough to have seen it, live or on TV, think, or talk about the 1974 World Cup, it is always Holland who are mentioned first.

The Dutch were a revelation, playing under Rinus Michels, returning home temporarily from Barcelona. The football of the Dutch captivated the world, and amongst the press, in Munich, in the three days before the final, I was one of the few tipping the Germans to win. Almost everyone thought the football-playing Dutchmen would murder Germany, as they had killed off all other teams they had encountered in the final stages.

There was nothing secret or tactical about the Dutch game. After the tournament, the Dutch inside left, Wim Van Hanegem, told me: "When Mr Michels assembled all the players at the first training camp before the World Cup, he had each player in his office alone, talking to them. Some were in with the boss a long time, but I was in and out in two minutes. Mr Michels said to me: 'I know what you can do, just play your own game', but perhaps with those in there longer he asked them to change their usual way of playing."

Message

Before each game there were few changes, and hardly any tactical talk. Play football and work hard, was the message. The players responded magnificently, with the blend of Ajax and Feyenoord players of the time, plus emigrant Johan Cruyff.

In the first seconds of the Final, Cruyff was picked up and marked tight by Berti Vogts, who will take over as manager of West Germany, after the 1990 World Cup. Vogts was a right back, and good. But to evade the attentions of Vogts, Cruyff dropped back deep. So deep, into his own half, that Vogts decided to abandon his orders and improvise.

Cruyff was in his own half when he received the ball, worked back to him, and he took off, straight down the middle, Route One. Going straight at goal, he was picked up by Vogts, who chased him 30 yards, matching him stride for stride, but because Cruyff was screening the ball from Vogts the German could not get in a tackle.

As Cruyff and Vogts entered the German penalty area, inside right Uli Hoeness, closed on Cruyff, to cover, and going in late, brought down the Dutchman. A penalty after only 85 seconds, and Johan Neeskens, typically, thumped the ball hard into the goal from the spot.

Vogts stayed tight on Cruyff after that, and fouled him twice, for which he received a yellow card. After six minutes 'boxing' in midfield, right back Wim Suurbier played the ball long up the Dutch right, to send the bustling Neeskens clear. When he drove the ball across goal, hard and low, there was no orange shirt there to give it the touch it needed.

Paul Breitner the German left back, began pushing up. Having scored two goals in the tournament, Breitner moved around, even turning up at inside right, and had a pop at goal, though over the bar. Arie Haan, the Dutch sweeper was attacking in the style of Franz Beckenbauer, though for most of the final the German ace was content to stay deep and cover. Haan was my Dutch 'man of the match', with Vogts the pick for West Germany.

On the 15 minute mark Haan moved right up inside the German penalty area, but significantly, in the battle of the masters, Beckenbauer was getting far more touches of the ball than Cruyff. This was where the Dutch fell down, for they needed a central striker playing upfield, and never had one. A banner carried by German fans said it all: "We know Bonhof, but who is Cruyff?" More importantly, where was Cruyff on the day Holland needed him most?

Every player on both sides was tightly marked, except for the two keepers and liberos, Beckenbauer and Haan. Beckenbauer was having a fine game, at the heart of the German defence, now beating two men, then finding a colleague with the outside of his foot. Haan and Neeskens kept leading the Dutch attacks from the front, probing all the time, and generally the Dutch were on top, but not making it pay.

Then, after 26 minutes, the Germans broke away, and the game turned.

Beckenbauer cleared a low cross from Neeskens, first time, finding Wolfgang Overath. He dribbled the ball forward, then hit a long pass up the left flank for Bernd Holzenbain. He ran forward with the ball at his feet, got deep inside the Dutch penalty area, and surrounded by orange shirts, went down.

A penalty was awarded, with Wim Janssen (of Feyenoord), presumably the offender, but I had doubts about the validity of the penalty. Later, in the second half, with only five minutes to go, there was a much clearer penalty appeal turned down for a foul when, with Germany 2-1 up, Holzenbein pushed the ball past Janssen and ran. The tackle by the Dutchman was clearly late, and Holzenbein did not dive. But it was rejected. It was a match littered with fouls; some given, many not, that needled both teams, and made matters worse.

Raiders

At 1-1 the Germans settled down, with Beckenbauer, Breitner, Bonhof and Sepp Maier at their best. Jurgen Grabowski began to raid on the right wing, and also switch to the left.

At a free kick just outside the Dutch penalty area, a wall of defenders blocked the view of Jongbloed, but when Uli Hoeness feinted to shoot, then ran over the ball for Beckenbauer to come up behind, and float a chip, Jongbloed made an excellent save, turning the ball over the bar. Aged 33, he had not played for Holland for 10 years prior to the World Cup, but was one of their big successes.

After 43 minutes came what proved to be the winning goal. Overath found Grabowski in a deep position on the right wing. While Grabowski feinted, prior to dribbling against Ruud Krol; Rainer Bonhof roared across the pitch from left midfield to outside right. Grabowski saw him, and let his pass go just right. Bonhof ran on, beating Janssen, then pulled the ball back, intended for Muller. 'Der Bomber' had made his break just a fraction too early and stumbled over the ball, which lay behind him, after he fumbled on the sprint. Three defenders were close, but due to his low centre of gravity Muller recovered before anyone; turned, took one step back, and shot low on the turn. From 6 yards it was rolled, but perfectly placed, low to the right hand of Jongbloed.

For the second half Holland replaced left winger Rob Rensenbrink with Rene Van der Kerkhof, as a working winger on both flanks. He did well but Holland still needed a central striker.

Then came that 'good' penalty for the Germans that was not given, and it was all over, with Helmut Schoen getting his hands on the World Cup after his 101st international in charge.

The winner – top scorer in the tournament Gerd Muller is on target.

LIFT THE BAN ON L
BUT NOT THE

The Brian Glanville COLUMN

DING DONG, the witch is dead. The foolish, ill conceived, massively irrelevant ID card scheme is no more. But rejoicing must be tempered. Above all by the horrifying knowledge that it took the cruel deaths of 95 blameless people at Hillsborough to bring about the demise of this foolish project.

An idea first floated by Mr Justice Oliver Popplewell in his curate's egg of a report, issued after the Bradford and Birmingham disasters, eagerly and mistakenly seized upon by Margaret Thatcher as a pajacea, shrilly canvassed and propagandised by Colin Moynihan, the Sports Minister, whom I described once as small but imperfectly informed. The cap still fits.

Mrs Thatcher, however, was the manifest organ grinder to Mr Moynihan's chattering monkey. As one who votes against parties, rather than for them, at any given election, I would still regard her as the least worst, but there are plainly moments when she digs her heels in, when, having committed herself to a certain policy, she sticks to it through thick and thin as a matter of pride and principle; however badly it may have been exposed. This was one of such moments.

Given the massive majority the Conservatives enjoy, the Prime Minister can force through almost any measure she chooses; unless, as in this case, she finds herself hoist with her own petard. Wiser than Popplewell, admirably independent, Mr Justice Taylor did exacly that. Having been appointed by the Government to inquire into the Sheffield tragedy, they could hardly gainsay his firmly held conclusions. The yapping and yammering of one back-bench Conservative MP, who made a deplorable attack on Taylor, was as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

There was never any hope or chance that identity cards would help, and long before Justice Taylor came out sturdily with his conclusions, it was plain that they would add to congestion, rather than to safety, that they would create danger, rather than alleviate it. What, for example, would have happened at Highbury, before the recent Arsenal-Spurs game, when thousands were locked out of the ground, milling in the street, had ID cards been obligatory? Attempts to counter this, the most basic and simple argument, were mindless at best, disingenuous at worst. Those journalists – and they were blessedly few – who lent their support to the ID scheme should in future appear in Press boxes wearing dunces' caps.

Three days before the confusion at Highbury, there was a nasty incident before the West Ham v Derby County League game. A group of Derby fans burst into a nearby pub and simply smashed it up, destruction for destruction's sake, destroying everything they could in as little time as possible. A deeply unpleasant event, if not, alas, a rare one. But what use would ID cards have been? Would the knowledge that, were they ever caught and convicted, they could have their cards taken away, have deterred the hooligans? I hardly think so.

Inside the stadiums, the police are now, by and large, pretty firmly in control, thanks to closed circuit television. There are occasional eruptions; such as that at Maine Road, at the Manchester derby. United fans managed to find their way into the City end, and there was some vicious fighting for several minutes, before the police eventually waded in and stopped it. But this kind of thing, as I have adumbrated, is the exception that proves the rule.

Let me not try to paint too encouraging a picture. There is still plenty of violence – how could it be otherwise, in so violent a society? – but it not takes place mostly away from the stadia; at service stations, railway stations, in the streets around the grounds. How can the police hope to be everywhere at once, to know in advance where violence will break out?

Solution

My Deep Throat on the terraces still believes, he tells me, that the only valid solutions is to ban away fans. But there seems no will to do this, and besides, it would be next to impossible in local derbies, of which London now has so many. Some would say too many!

What, now, of the question of the English clubs' return to Europe? Colin Moynihan, illogically, had made the assumption of ID cards a condition of supporting their re-entry; this itself being a condition imposed by UEFA, nervous of potential liability in case of trouble.

I feel now as I have felt for years that what is needed is a controlled experiment, that one or two clubs should be admitted to European competitions, but that care be taken over what kind of clubs they are. In other words, of the nature of their supporters.

This raises an especially difficult problem with regard to Liverpool. It is rumoured that if and when the ban is lifted, UEFA will waive the extra, three year suspension of Liverool. So far as Liverpool as a club are concerned, one would only applaud such a move. Liverpool set a splendid example to the game at large. They are serious, responsible and mature. But the same cannot be said of their fans, who for years before Heysel enjoyed a wholly spurious reputation for good conduct, when they were in fact among the most violent and aggresive in the country.

Top: Lord Justice Taylor. Above: Minister for Sport Colin Moynihan. Right: Liverpool FC have set a splendid example to the game – their Euro ban should be lifted.

Let Liverpool back, and presumably you'd have to let their fans back. The fans whose behaviour – compounded, it's true, by the ineptitude of the Belgian police, the inefficiency of UEFA and the Belgian FA – resulted in the 39 deaths at Heysel. I find myself torn. I would desperately like to see Liverpool return to Europe. As a team, as a club, they deserve it; and Europe has sorely missed them. But how to restrain the barbarian hordes? Can they effectively be stopped? Very doubtful indeed, when you consider how impossible it has been to stop the very worst England "supporters" following the flag, despite a ban on tickets. As in Sweden.

So there we are. It's a matter of how to square the circle. All Europe wants Liverpool. Nobody wants their violent supporters (yes, yes, I am perfectly well aware that Liverpool has its decent, salt of the earth supporters, too, but, as Bernard Shaw said to the heckler, what are two among so many? Or even two hundred).

Besides, even if the English clubs are re-admitted, what will happen if the England fans run riot in Cagliari? Would Colin Moynihan then withdraw his support for the re-entry of the clubs, assuming he had already given it? You will know my views on this

LIVERPOOL– EIR FANS

problem. Like the flowers that bloom in the Spring, tra-la, it has nothing to do with the case. The England roughnecks may all, in their psychotic way, "support" one club or another, but they are a case apart. To punish the clubs for what happens when England go abroad has been at once illogical and dishonest. Heaven forbid that the Senior Citizens (sorry, Senior International Committee) of the F.A. should ever be deprived of their expensive trips abroad; but to bleat, when England fans run amok, that English clubs must not be re-admitted to Europe makes no sense at all. Except, of course, in terms of what might be termed self-interest.

Stuart Hall.

How BBC Radio Sport can score

AT a recent match at San Siro between Inter and Sampdoria, my friend Enrico Ameri, the leading Italian radio commentator, found himself abused and besieged by jeering fans. Listening to his commentary, they had heard him ascribe a goal scored by Lothar Matthaus to a Sampdoria player, as an own goal. Ameri was so upset that he opened the door of his commentary box, remonstrated them, told them to give him a break, and managed to subdue the hubbub.

Will this ever happen to Stuart Hall? And if not, why not? Commenting, from time to time, on Liverpool's exciting drawn game against Liverpool, he contrived to give both Luton's goals to Kingsley Black. Those of us sitting at other matches, listening on transistors, of course loyally believed him, especially as he said as much several times. But he was wrong. Black had scored the first goal; he had only made the second. Seen on television, it was hard to misunderstand how there could have been any confusion. Black had come in from the left, crossed the ball, and Luton's new striker had shot home.

But Mr Hall is – perhaps blessedly – sui generis, the master not of psycho babble but what one might term, instead, soccer burble. It is hard to learn, from his high octane effusions, exactly what is happening in a game; or even, at times, roughly what is happening. All this, however, should be seen in context. Mr Hall is a Television Personality, and such paragons make rules of their own. You can see him "fronting" the kind of jolly programme which I, I must confess, automatically switch off. But he is, I am told, very popular indeed with listeners and viewers alike. Again, what are two – or even one? – among so many.

Let me, however, declare an interest. I am an inveterate listener to BBC Sport on Two throughout the week, and usually an admirer. Mr Hall, on that unfortunate Anfield occasion, may simply have been prey to what was undoubtedly a Bad Day for BBC 2. When Sports Report came on the air, soon after an exhaustive commentary on the Manchester United v Derby Country game, it was announced in the preamble that United's Gary Pallister had been sent off. He hadn't; he had scored. It was the other centre-back, Steve Bruce, who had been sent off, after only 11 minutes. Both the goal and the sending off had been impeccably described by the commentators.

But I have a larger bone to pick with BBC 2, and in private, have often done so with their distinguished commentators. In a word, I think their present practice is utterly out of date, that the three quarter of an hour commentary on a single match should have gone out with the Ark; or at least, with Raymond Glendenning.

Restrictions

This is not wholly fair of me, I know. The Football League put heavy restrictions on the amount of time the commentaries can allot to different games; and this, too, is an obsolescence. Listen to the Spanish, French or Italian commentaries, and you will hear every First Division game being covered. Goals are trumps. When one is scored, there is a cry of GOAL! from the relevant ground, and the commentary switches there at once, for a description. I find this not only informative but exciting. Far more so than an endless, seamless commentary, however learned the interpolations from the likes of Denis Law and Trevor Brooking, on just one game.

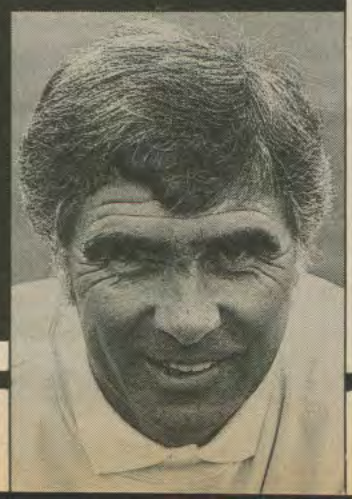
Radio lives. In an age dominated by the television, it still has a part of play. Thousands of people carry their transistors around with them. Radio, during a League or Cup programme, can be first with the news. My BBC commentator friends argue that people want the continuing, building drama of the single match. I doubt it. How many games are worth it? From time to time, the BBC choose one which turns out to be abysmal. But even if it doesn't, my argument remains valid.

The single match commentary, besides, will always, during its hiatuses and longeurs – and even during the action – lead to what I call editorialising, comment by the commentator rather tharf description, leaving him fatally open to being overtaken by a sudden incident. Even a goal!

What I should like to see, now, is the opening of a debate. There are, I am aware, arguments on both sides, and besides, all is academic while the Football League applies its present restrictions.

CAN David Mamet, the celebrated American playwright, be psychic? When things were at their worst for Wimbledon, at the turn of the year, he put his latest play on, on Broadway. It was called Bobby Gould in Hell.

A sheer coincidence? Or did he, unconciously, read Bobby's name in the newspapers, hear it on television, on one of his various visits to London? After the victory over Arsenal, was he tempted to change his title to Bobby Gould in Heaven?



AFRICAN NATIONS' CUP PREVIEW

BY BOB PATEMAN

Hosts Algeria could make up for World Cup setback

Belloumi – injuries have taken their toll.

AN IMPRESSIVE field is about to gather in Algeria for the 1990 African Nations' Cup finals.

Morocco, surprisingly eliminated by Mali, are the only really big name absent, although Tunisia and a much improved Zaire might claim to rank among the top eight African countries. Of the sides that have qualified only Kenya will travel north without any realistic hopes of taking the title.

Kenya were helped to the finals by a relatively easy qualifying route that paired them with Sudan and Malawi. Indeed the tie with Sudan went to penalties, which was hardly an impressive performance, but this Kenya side does have plenty of raw talent. Peter Dawo is the best of the forwards and should enjoy the occasion, while goalkeeper David Ochieng, Sammy Onyango and Bernard Otieno have a good chance to enhance their growing reputations.

Kenya play in Annaba, where they will be joined by Senegal, Cameroon and Zambia. Senegal, hosts in 1992, beat Tunisia to get here, but their squad doesn't look as strong as the one they put together for the 1986 finals. Roger Mendy, now a seasoned pro in France, is still there and will be a pillar of strength in defence and Abdoulaye Diallo of Marseille has the potential to cause some fireworks up front.

Missing stars

Many of the big names, most noticeably Jules Bocande, have not been available for the national team recently and it remains to be seen if they will return for this tournament.

Even at full strength Senegal are going to be lucky to get the better of either Zambia or Cameroon. These two are becoming old rivals, Zambia knocking Cameroon out of the last World Cup and the West Africans getting their revenge in the 1986 Nation's Cup. Zambia have always been able to throw up the occasional good team, without ever quite being able to sustain their success.

Partly this is due to their relatively low population, just under seven million people compared with Egypt's forty nine million and Nigeria's one hundred and twenty million. Certainly the KK Eleven are going through a good spell at present, most noticeably in the Olympics, although the World Cup perhaps demonstrated their limiations.

Their best known player is of course Kalusha Bwalya, but I can't help but think that he is over rated. Yes, he had a wonderful half hour against Italy in the Olympics, but over the years he has never shown the consistency, or scored the goals, that would mark him as a truly great player. In an all-time African eleven I would much prefer Pokou, Odegbami, Al Khatib or Milla.

Of course Milla won't be there this time as Cameroon attempt to go for their third win in six years. When you consider that period includes a penalty defeat to hosts Egypt in the 1986 finals, it is a remarkable record.

New look

Will they continue their run? History suggests not, as teams qualified for the World Cup seldom do well in the Nation's Cup. However I am certainly not brave enough to suggest that Cameroon are going to be defeated this time. This is in some ways a new look side. N'Kono and Bell continue their rivalry for the goalkeepers jersey, with Bell now seeming to have a clear edge, but Milla is gone, and so is that quiet man of the defence Aoudou, the talented full back Sinkot, and Abega. Other old hands have had to step up from the shadows to acccept leading roles. None more so than Kunde, the muscular heart of the midfield who has become the main strength, inspiration and at times goalscorer of the side.

In front of him Oman Biyik, with his eye for the goal, must try to fill Milla's shoes. Now a veteran of the French league, and hopefully with his injuries behind him, he certainly made a good job of doing just that in the World Cup.

With Cameroon and Zambia meeting in the first game a defeat would place either side under pressure, yet a draw would open the way for Senegal to take advantage of them both. Form says Zambia and Cameroon, instinct says to expect a surprise.

Things are going to be even closer in Algiers. First of all there is the home side, Algeria. Fit and organised as always they have, in recent years, lacked sparkle. Even if Belloumi reconsiders his retirement age and injury have battered his unique skills. Rabah Madjer, also a former African Player of the Year, has emerged to take over some of the pressure but, even at his best, Madjer has never been a play maker in the Belloumi role. Elsewhere there are other players of experience, Djamal Megharia in defence and Medane up front, but it still doesn't look a side to get particularly excited about. However, playing at home, and with no World Cup to distract them, who would bet against Algeria?

Their main challenge in this first stage could well come from Nigeria. The west Africans, with five men in midfield, played well in the World Cup and we wait to see how much confidence their elimination took out of them.

Stephen Keshi, the Belgium based star who stabilizes their three man defence and still finds the time to come up and score vital goals, has become their key figure. Ademola Adesine, Friday Eupo and Samse Sissia are other players to look out for.

Egypt are also in this group and must be considered as one of the favourites. They are through to the World Cup and look an interesting combination of old and new names. The fierce Abdelghani is still in midfield and Abu Zeid might be available, although he has spent considerable time out with injuries recently. Up front Gamal Abdel-Hamid, another veteran of the 1986 side, continues to produce goals with a combination of hard work, strength and bravery. He will be well aware that a good performance in Algeria will secure a World Cup starting place ahead of the challenges of Mohammed Ramad and Hossam Hassan.

Of the three of them it is Hossam Hassan who has the greatest potential. A few seasons ago he looked like setting the African scene alight, but somehow it never quite happened and he remains relatively unknown outside of Egypt. Algiers could well prove to be a breakthrough tournament for him.

Of the new names in the squad Ahmed Shoubier looks set to become the next in the long line of fine Egyptian goalkeepers, while defenders Hani Ramzi and Ashraf Qassem are the unknown figures in the side.

Hostile

Egypt will probably find Algeria a more hostile ground than other teams and that could, in the end, cost them dearly in what is otherwise a very evenly matched group.

Even the fourth side in the group, Ivory Coast, can hardly be dismissed. They were put out of the World Cup group due largely to the absence of their best known stars, a situation that caused some tension between the football authorities in Abidjan and Paris. If Fofana and Abdoulaye Traore are available then they could beat anybody. Even without this famous double act Ivory Coast like being able to count on goalkeeper Gouamene, the rugged Grobgo Lago and the new bright star, Sekou Bomba.

Home advantage seems to suggest that Algeria will make the last 4 and the second spot is something of a lottery but I suspect Nigeria might be the side to edge ahead.

This will be the last of the eight nation finals, and as from 1992 the Nation's Cup will be enlarged to 12 teams with games being scheduled in three cities. The move is the idea of the new CAF president, Issa Hayatou, and has been pushed through with almost embarrassing speed. Senegal had accepted the responsibility of staging the 1992 games expecting the old format. Now they find themselves with an altogether larger, more complex and more expensive tournament on their hands.

It is certainly difficult to see any justification for the increase in size. One of the major problems over recent years has been finding sub-Sahara nations willing to stage the event – Algeria will be the fourth host from north Africa in the last five tournaments.

Indeed you have to go back to 1976 to find the championships being staged in either central or Eastern Africa. Zambia, you might remember, were due to hold the 1988 championship but dropped out due to financial problems. How much more difficult to stage a 12 team event.

Kenya, with new facilities from the All African Games might well have come through as a potential host in the near future. Nairobi facilities and hotels are excellent and the stadium in Mombassa could have been brought up to scratch. But a third venue? Nakuru and Kisumu are the next biggest towns and with populations of under 50,000 they lack the facilities or charter to successfully stage the event.

The increase to 12 teams, with the need for a third venue, will probably also rule out Zimbabwe, Zambia, Gabon, and Togo as future hosts.

Neither can 12 nation finals really be justified by the standards of play in Africa at present. Eight places have been more than enough to allow minor teams a change to qualify. In recent years Mozambique, Kenya and Togo have all reached the finals, and going back a little further you can find as unlikely qualifiers as Burkina Faso and even Mauritius.

At present qualifying is a considerable achievement while still not being beyond the dreams of most nations. Increasing to 12, so that nobody of note gets left out, removes much of the honour of getting there.

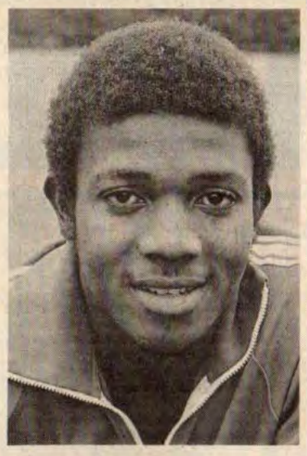
Ironically the increase in size comes at a time when the continent's economy continues to slide ever downwards and it is simply not a good time to attract the sponsorship that might pay for the bigger tournament. After all even Europe, with all it's facilities and wealth, only has an 8 nation championship.

Then why the change? If you could answer that you might have the solution to many of Africa's problems.

AFRICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

In Annaba:
Kenya
Senegal
Cameroon (holder)
Zambia

In Algiers:
Algeria (hosts)
Nigeria
Ivory Coast
Egypt



Left: Egypt's Ahmed Shoubier looks set to become a top 'keeper. Above: Nigeria's Stephen Keshi.

Antoine Bell now looks likely to beat Thomas N'Kono for the Cameroon No. 1 spot.

DEUTSCHLAND ÜBER ALLES?

BY PENTTI HIETANEN

Is this the shape of Europe 2000?

The prospects are there: a reunited Germany; Sporting independence for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; and the likes of Andorra and Monte Carlo following the go-it-alone examples of San Marino and The Faroe Islands.

Who now would bet against it?

THE political upheavals in eastern Europe have brought about the prospect of a reunion of the two Germanies.

Perhaps it is premature to forecast such happenings, despite the sudden collapse of the Berlin wall, but it is still a mind-boggling vision, to say the least, even if we only concentrate on soccer.

Of course, West Germany are already a world power on their own, but while their eastern neighbours continue to lead an existence in Europe's second division, they, too, have produced a legion of top players over the years.

Surely, past DDR stars like Eberhardt Vogel, Peter Ducke, Jurgen Croy, Joachim Streich, Hans-Jurgen Dorner, Bernd Bransch or Hans-Jurgen Kreische would have been good enough to play for West Germany as well.

Although there was one Germany before the Second World War, a possible reunion would nevertheless introduce a footballing super power of a totally different scale. You only have to take a quick glance at the numbers to understand that.

In 1930, there were 8600 football clubs and a total of 1.25 million players in Germany. Today, in West Germany alone, there are 20,945 clubs and 4.7 million players, of which nearly 800 are full-time professionals. To add to these figures, the DDR also have 5,700 clubs and half a million registered players.

The West German federation, the DFB, is the one to continue the tradition of the country's original federation of the same name, which was founded in 1900. Perhaps there is some justification for that, at least, if you think that the national team was coached before and after the Second World War by the same man, the legendary Sepp Herberger. Also, the third place that Germany achieved during the 1934 World Cup finals is generally credited to West Germany.

However, one mustn't forget that the original DFB was founded in Leipzig, now part of the DDR, and that the headquarters were switched to Berlin only in 1928.

Leipzig and Dresden, two big DDR centres, were always among Germany's most prominent footballing cities. Indeed, it was Vfb Leipzig who won the first-ever German championship in 1903. Dresdner SC collected the last one in 1944, with one Helmut Schoen as their star forward.

The 'old Germany' always managed to present a somewhat erratic picture of themselves in football, quite different from the ruthless efficiency with which West Germany have dominated Europe, not to mention the World Cup, in recent decades.

After being admitted to the FIFA in 1904, Germany took part in the Olympic football tournament of 1912, in Stockholm, Their participation was still more or less academic, resulting in a 5-1 defeat by Austria.

After missing the Olympic games of 1920 and 1924 due to political problems created by the First World War, the Germans returned to action in 1928, in Amsterdam. And this time with a sting, too. They beat Switzerland 4-0, thanks to three goals by Richard Hofmann. Alas, that success was marred by a 4-0 defeat to Uruguay, the future World Cup winners, in a stormy match where both Hofmann and Hans Kalb were sent-off.

Hat-trick

Hofmann 'King Richard' to the fans later found fame with a hat-trick in a 3-3 draw with England in Berlin, in 1930. A year earlier, in a 3-0 win over Sweden, he had netted no less than six times – but three of the goals had been disallowed! After the war, Hofmann lived in the DDR, and became an honorary member of the DFV, the East German federation, after a long career as a coach.

In spite of that third place in the 1934 World Cup finals, arguably the finest pre-war German side was assembled by Herberger in 1937. This so-called Breslau-Elf won back the admiration for the national team, which had tarred its image with a poor showing during the Berlin Olympics. The team included all-time greats like Paul Janes in defence, the cover midfield orchestrator from Schalke, Fritz Szepan, as well as Otto Siffling and Allan Urban up-front.

Mannheim-born Siffling died in 1939 at the age of only 27. A slim, agile forward, he once put five goals past Denmark and, in Mannheim, a youth tournament in his memory is held every year.

The Breslau-Elf never got the chance to prove its worth in the World Cup finals. After the Nazi Anschluss of Austria in 1938, the best Austrian players were forced to play for the Greater German side seemingly without anyone giving a thought for the fact that the Vienna school of soccer was totally different to the one practiced in Germany.

Poor Herberger could do nothing to stop the farce as Germany, strong only in the paper, fell at the first hurdle in the World Cup finals of 1938.

In the aftermath of the war, in 1945, the DFB were expelled from the FIFA as a Nazi-influenced organization, but, of course, football would soon be played again the now split country.

In 1947, the three western occupation zones of Germany formed a Deutscher Fussballausschuss under Dr Peco Bauwens, in Frankfurt.

It was from this organisation that the resurrection of the DFB took place, in 1950, when they were also re-admitted to the FIFA.

In 1948, the clubs of the western zones also played their first post-war championship with I. FC Nurnberg as the first winners. However, they were not alone anymore. In the Soviet occupation zone a new league was soon also put into action. In 1949, the first cup competition of the newly-founded DDR was contested and won by BSG Waggonbau Dessau.

West Germany were soon back among the world's elite as the ingenious Herberger masterminded a shock victory in the 1954 World Cup final over hot favourites Hungary. In the years of the cold war, the relations between the two Germanies were often troublesome and, as far as football was concerned, there were some strange arrangements for the Olympic games.

In 1952, in Helsinki, footballers from West Germany represented the country, finishing fourth after losing the bronze-medal match 2-0 to Sweden. So far so good, but when the DDR joined the International Olympic Committee in 1955, problems began. The IOC clearly did not know how to handle two Germanies.

At first, they were made to co-operate, which, in those years of political wranglings, were plain impossibility. When no solution was found, the East Germans declared that their footballers were not available for a united German side to travel to the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. The west then sent out a weak side which lost 2-1 in their first match against the Soviet Union.

For the 1960 Olympics, the IOC ordered the two German sides to play-off for the right to represent Germany. West Germany won both matches, but failed to qualify for the final tournament in Rome.

The same procedure was again used for the Olympics in Tokyo four years later.

This time the DDR surprisingly accounted for their western neighbours 4-2 on aggregate. They also went on to provide a major shock by knocking out the Soviet Union from the competition and reaching the semi-finals.

In 1963, full-time professionalism had been re-introduced in West Germany with the birth of a strong national league, the Bundesliga. Olympic football became meaningless. The World Cup finals and the European Championships were now the competitions in which to shine. And, indeed, West Germany did just that.

Upsets

The DDR were soon looking like poor little brothers of their 'declined capitalist' neighbours. However, even during the Golden period of the West German soccer, the Beckenbauer era, the DDR were able to cause two major upsets. Ironically, on both occasions the matches were played on the West German soil.

During the Munich Olympics of 1972, the DDR beat the hosts 3-2 to reach the semi-finals.

That was a shock enough, but even a bigger surprise followed in the 1974 World Cup as the countries were drawn to meet each other in Hamburg. West Germany seemed to have all the stars – Beckenbauer, Maier, Muller, Vogts – but the East Germans were worthy 1-0 winners with a memorable goal by Jurgen Sparwasser.

This time, however, West Germany had the last laugh by going on to win their second World Cup title.

Perhaps the first real evidence of a sporting reunion is permission for East German players to transfer to the Bundesliga. Bayer Leverkusen have secured Dynamo Berlin's star forward Andreas Thom. If Thom succeeds, several other transfers are bound to follow.

But whatever the future may hold, some bookmakers already believe in the rebirth of one Germany.

They are already taking bets on a united German team to win the 1994 World Cup!

West Germany shook the football world with victory over giants Hungary in 1954.

Truth comes out but ... Rumania have a long way to go

BY BOB VAUGHAN

NOW what for Rumanian soccer after the December overthrow of a hated dictatorship which permeated every pore of the country's life?

Sport was considered important proof, when successful, of Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's regular pronouncements that all was well with the nation.

Not only was no effort spared to ensure clubs and individuals representing the country had every advantage in international competition, but life was made easy for those representatives at home in domestic competition.

Soccer was no exception. For years league and cup have been a two, at best a three, horse race with the army-sponsored Steaua side having only the Securitate backed Dinamo as contenders for the title with Victoria Bucharest taking third place in recent time – giving the capital three European competitors and the pick of the country's players.

As elsewhere fixtures were shameless, postponed or brought forward to ease preparation for international commitments with scant regard for the lesser fry from the provinces whose only chance was an occasional UEFA Cup place.

Referees 'had their instructions' and the number of times the top two scraped home away is too numerous to mention. Some would say this even happened in Steaua's second best European campaign, culminating in an ignominious rout by Ruud Gullit's Milan in Barcelona where no help was available.

In the semi-final with the Turkish surprise packet, Galatasaray, it may have been another story. Why was Golden Boot winner Tanju Colak's goal disallowed when Galatasaray were trailing 2-0? Even the Steaua defenders were walking back towards the centre spot. The 'Stars' admittedly ran out eventually the clear victors but it was an important turning point reinforced by some yellow cards which rendered the Turkish champions impotent for the second leg.

The Rumanian game probably first has to come clean about these and other matters about which there is considerable concern outside as well as now inside the land where officials, managers, coaches and players should soon be able to tread without fear and go about their sporting business as in any other country.

But first we need to know from the various horses' mouths what really happened. Nobody any longer believes the 1986 penalty hero Helmut Ducadam really had an unfortunate accident at home as claimed at one time. He obviously paid very dearly but it was not thrombosis!

He was not allowed to keep the sponsors' car for his penalty saves in Seville and was it the Securitate's nocturnal visit which saw to it that his football career went in to no higher gear?

Equally Rumanian soccer needs to come and clear up whatever was put in training to facilitate Rodion Camataru's astonishing late season goal tally to pip an understandably enraged Toni Polster of FK Austria for the 1987 Golden Boot: 21 goals in seven games was some finish! Messrs Clive Allen and Brian McClair were as unamused as Polster.

The sooner the truth is revealed the better. There is no longer any need to worry about bad uncle Ilie Ceausescu, the late and unlamented President's brother, who presided over the umbrella sports organisation Steaua's affairs, or 'chaperon' Nicu to see instructions were followed and profits from games in the West appropriately salted away.

The army club could again become as popular as they did in the 1950s when created on the lines of the Soviet Central Army Sports Club model.

Crowds flocked to see friendlies with such as Luton Town and CCA Bucharest, as the Rumanian army side were known, were interesting visitors to Kenilworth Road, Highbury and Hillsborough on what was the first post-1945 visit of a Rumanian football team to Britain.

Corruption

On its association with the Ceausescu clan the club's popularity plummeted, corruption became rife and intrigue the order of the day. Even 'Crown Prince' Nicu was not always au fait with what the right hand was doing while the left was dropping off Elena Ceausescu's "goodies" at Otopeni Airport for later collection. Even he found he was out of the party for the visit to Eindhoven.

There was no presidential reception there as had been after the 1986 Seville victory – following the 'duffing' by a rampant PSV who in a manner of speaking set the Rumanian 'Stars' alight.

A number of high ranking officers, including Colonel Tanase at the Ministry of Defence, had to bite the bullet as it was Ceausescu's adopted son Valentin who ran the show, now the manager or trainers. Uncle Ilie and Valentin briefed the poor old refs that they would be monitoring their decisions and heaven help them!

Three seasons ago when Dinamo were beating Steaua in the 'Finala Cupei Romanie', young Valentin ordered Steaua off the pitch. Dinamo took the cup but following deliberations the 'Stars' were awarded the trophy!

Ion Voinescu, holder of 22 caps and a retired army colonel, has revealed that it was Steaua football chief Ion Alexandrescu who had brought in the dictator's clan for protection and this had resulted in the corrupting of football.

Now the fixing must stop. 'U' Craiova and Politechnica Timisoara must be able to compete on equal terms and not have their best performers delegated to or gently ushered to army or police posts. These two clubs became the 'dissidents' who had to be seen off, few of their players being as brave as defender Gheorghe Popescu who refused point blank to leave despite the three armed military men sent to put the fear of death into him.

1986 European Cup Final hero Helmut Ducadam – mystery accident?

Voinescu, still a popular figure, says the might of the corrupt FKF (FA) mafia must be broken.

At least a start has been made in the specialist soccer press. Pre-revolution, tame reporters were sent to cover top clubs' games. The editor of the daily sports paper, Sportul, somewhat askin in concept, though certainly not in content to France's L'Equipe, Cornel Popescu, was under pressure to send sympathetic scribes to matches.

Like Voinescu he refused to be compromised but his name does not appear under the masthead of Sportul's successor, Gazeta Sporturilor which shows another break with the past.

It concerns itself with sport and not the self laudatory speeches of corrupt politicians. As its new masthead proclaims it reports independently the daily happenings in the country's sport.

Early in February the Gazeta announced the outline football programme for the spring. Details are awaited but priority will doubtless and reasonably be given to World Cup preparation and, to a lesser extent, to the former Dinamo club's Cup-winners' Cup prospects in the quarter-finals. Under what banner this will be remains to be seen.

UEFA rules state that entrants in their three premier competitions may not change their name during a campaign. The news from Berne is, however, that in the extraordinary circumstances there will be tolerance.

Be that as it may Dinamo's claim to be reverting to its previous name looks a dubious one. The original 'Unirea Tricolor' club first appears 50 years ago in Rumanian soccer records when they gained promotion from Division B (the Second Division) to A at the end of the 1938/39 season. They went up with Gloria CFR Galati, CAMT Timisoara and Muresul Tg. Mures.

In their second season in the top flight 'Tricolor Union' won the championship with a record number of points, 38, since the introduction of a league system in 1932/33 – though, admittedly, it was the first campaign of 24 matches.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

Cash flows only one way

LORD Justice Taylor has produced a fine report on the state of the English league club grounds, but while it has stirred up a hornet's nest, little will be done in the long orshort term, unless the clubs are subsidised.

Like everything else, it is a beast with two heads.

If a club need money to buy a new player – who, on the recommendation of their manager can either clinch promotion, the championship or avoid relegation – money will be found, but it will usually be, among the smaller clubs, by club directors putting up their own money.

They will never do that for ground improvements.

As a contributor who went with his father to matches, back in the 1930s, and has travelled widely, both in the British Isles and beyond, I can take a global view. Derby, Manchester United and Everton, as well as dozens of clubs I have visited in the lower divisions, have grounds surrounded either by row upon row of houses, or a mixture of residential and commercial premises which would be too costly to buy.

That rules out expansion, except at great cost, because everything round the ground would have to be negotiated for on an individual basis, and it would be a seller's market.

BY ERIC BATTY

Everton have a chapel protruding into one corner of their ground, and Arsenal who moved to 'better premises' years after being formed, are all in this trap.

What is needed is ground-sharing, with new stadia of modern design, built on virgin land outside the conurbations.

This is what I found at the World Cup in Mexico, 1970, and in West Germany in 1974. The clubs who owned the grounds had received huge sums of money from government and local authorities, to build new stadia. Even in 1958 the Swedes built their Ullevi stadion in Gothenburg, especially for the World Cup.

Thus, if one goes to a game, by car of course, in Germany, there is no fear of getting lost between the Autobahn and the football ground. No fear, as in England that police signs will ban all car parking for an area roughly two miles around the ground as in England.

Spectators are expected to arrive by car, and on and off the Autobahn there are clear signs plus convenient and huge free car parks.

Italy is the same. Their grounds zare owned in most cases, by the city corporation, who built the stadia outstide the town/city, and take a slice of the receipts.

Even in 1966 when a great deal of money was forthcoming from all variety of sources to 'improve' the grounds chosen for World Cup games, not one club chose the virgin land option. Money was spent on better seating; more seating, and marginal things that would improve income long-term, in addition to bringing the grounds up to an acceptable standard.

The real opportunity was not only missed, it was not understood.

Bryan Robson shock for England

ENGLAND'S World Cup plans have been thrown into turmoil by another injury to captain Bryan Robson. The midfield player, out of action since December 23, has had a hernia operation and is unlikely to play again until April.

This latest setback for Robson has come at a wretched time for his country and his club, Manchester United. England are anxious to go to Italy thoroughly prepared, United are desperate merely to survive in the First Division. The figure of Robson is essential to both those ambitions.

Robson sustained a groin injury early in the League match at Liverpool but, typically, played on to lead his side to a morale-bolstering goalless draw.

At first it seemed he might miss a couple of games, no more. But despite intensive treatment his progress was slow and he wasn't able to contemplate even a practice match until the beginning of February.

That match was short-lived for Robson and his second last just two minutes. He broke down the first time he kicked the ball. He limped away, dejected, head bowed. His manager, Alex Ferguson, already under intense pressure, was devastated. Robson was sent to a Harley Street specialist, who told him he should have surgery. He had the operation immediately.

Ferguson said: "It's a big disappointment for us but at least we know where we stand. When he broke down we were at our wits end. He's been running all right during the morning, but as soon as he tried to kick a ball we knew he was in trouble. Bryan Robson is the sort of player who has to go for everything. There are no half measures with him. Yet again, he has had to pay a heavy price for it.

"He was injured right at the start of the game at Liverpool and could easily have come off after a few minutes. Being the man he is he stayed on. Had I known how badly he was going to aggrevate it, though, I would certainly have brought him off.

"Now, hopefully, the operation will put him right. It just means that we wasted the previous six weeks."

At that stage United had gone 11 League games without a win and slumped to fourth bottom place in the First Division. But they had reached the fifth round of the FA Cup and Ferguson was hoping to have his skipper back for the tie at Newcastle.

England manager Bobby Robson was equally keen to have his namesake for the friendly interantional against Brazil at Wembley on March 28. Now boss Robson will be grateful to see the player in is side for the match against Czechoslovakia on April 25.

Bobby Robson called Bryan Robson the country's player of the eighties and described him as one of England's greatest ever captains. The praise has been as constant as the player's commitment.

His all-round game – covering and tackling, creating and scoring – has made him invaluable at club and interantional level. Perhaps more important still is his leadership, his example and the inspiration he provides for those around him.

But his whole-hearted approach has inevitably made him vulnerable to injury. He has missed significant games, none more so than when he broke down with a recurrence of his shoulder injury during the last World Cup finals in Mexico.

At the age of 33 the knocks and the setbacks become harder to take, but United are confident he will be back for the climax of the domestic season.

BY DERICK ALLSOP

England will then be thankful if he has a trouble-free run to Italy.

While Bobby Robson is fine-tuning for the World Cup he may find the time to spare a thought for the next campaign, the European Championships. England have familiar opposition for a place in the finals, to be held in Sweden in 1992. The other countries in Group Seven are the Republic of Ireland, Poland and Turkey. Only one team goes through.

The Irish connection is quite extraordinary. Jack Charlton's side beat England 1-0 in the last European Championship and the two nations come face to face in Sardinia this summer.

Robson said: "The draw is a whole series of astonishing coincidences. Jack will feel his team has a chance, as will the Poles. But we are not seeded second behind Holland, the champions, for nothing. We expect to get through to the finals.

"The wider concerns of the English game stem from the report by Lord Justice Taylor, which was commission by the Government following last year's Hillsborough disaster.

There was hearty approval for the condemnation of the proposed indentity card system, but less enthusiasm for the task of producing all seater stadiums within five years. The estimated bill for this massive project is estimated at 150m, and the chances are that figure is a conversative one.

Many clubs argue that thousands of their fans prefer to stand, that the removal of the terraces will also remove some of the game's soul and tradition. Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards said: 'It will cost us something like 10m to do the required work at Old Trafford. This puts presure on the big clubs and could force some small clubs out of business altogether.

"The suggestion that the work can be financed by the clubs, using their money in this way rather than on transfer fees, is absolutely nonsense. Transfer money circulates in the game and should stay there."

Football League chief executive Arthur Sandford said: "There is a very real possibility that some of the smaller clubs lining a hand-to-mouth existence will not be able to afford the alterations required. If they can't then, like any other branch of industry, they will go to the wall."

Perhaps the most famous terrace in the world, Anfield's Kop, exploded in celebration as Liverpool won the tribal skirmish with Everton 2-1 and opened a three-point gap at the top of the First Division.

Goals by England pair John Barnes and Peter Beardsley put them in command and although Graeme Sharp pulled one back for Everton, Kenny Dalglish's side held on to the points.

However, second club Aston Villa have two matches in hand, as do third-placed Arsenal, a further four points adrift. Nottingham Forest arefourth and Tottenham fifth after their 4-0 defeat of Norwich. Gary Lineker was in sharp form, scoring a hat-trick.

In the Manchester derby, United were held 1-1 at Old Trafford by a City team showing signs of recovery under the guidance of Howard Kendall. The three clubs left below United were Millwall, Luton and Charlton.

Charlton, the great escape artists of recent seasons, appear to be slipping too far this time. The scrap above them promises to be fierce, with Crystal Palace, Sheffield Wednesday and Manchester City all in danger.

Leeds and Sheffield United have led the way in the Second Division for much of the season, but Osvaldo Ardiles' Swindon moved up to third place with a 3-2 victory against Leeds. Oldham have been matching their Cup exploits by climing to fourth spot.

FROM SEAN CREEDON

JACK Charlton has a score to settle when Wales visit Lansdowne Road later this month for a friendly.

The Welsh are the only country to have beaten the Republic in Dublin since he was appointed manager. That deafeat came in Charlton's first game in charge, four years ago. Since then the Republic are unbeaten in 17 games in Dublin.

Bernie Slaven seems certain to make his debut in the green shirt against Wales, having been told by Charlton early in February that he was being called up. The Paisley-born striker declared for the Republic under FIFA's parently rule despite a last minute plea by Scottish manager Andy Roxburgh for the Middlesbrough player to change his mind.

Four years ago Charlton gave another Scottish-born player the chance to declare for the Republic, his name Ray Houghton. Slaven could prove to be as popular a 'steal' as the Liverpool star.

Swindon's Alan McLoughlin, who has also successfully traced his Irish roots, is likely to play for the Republic in the B international against England at Turner's Cross, Cork, on March 27.

On April 25 the Republic play the Soviet Union in Dublin and on May 16 Finland visit Lansdowne Road in a testimonial for Liam Brady.

Arms Park looks the favourite

By MARK WEST

THE debate about the future internationals hosted by Wales goes on. Cardiff Arms Park, home of Welsh Rugby Union, has become an early front runner. This would be a popular choice simply because it is a focus of Welsh nationalism.

The Football Association of Wales indicated that perhaps Ninian Park may fit the bill. However, this brought howls of protests from Swansea and Wrexham respectively. There is a lot of prestige and income still attached to hosting international football matches.

The arguments will still go on but a decision will probably be made later this year.

Curiously, it has been suggested that Merthyr Tydil's Penydarren Park ground may stage a full international this season.

Merthyr, you may recall, were the Welsh representatives in the European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1987-88. They may be again next term after putting out Welsh Cup holders Swansea City in this season's competition.

There is positive hope for Merthyr and the belief that by the end of the 1990s they may become Wales's leading club side. They presently content the GM Vauxhall Conference which acts as a sort of Division Five for the English Football League. A firm foundation is being built by manager Lyn Jones.

Merthyr was represented in the Football League by Merthyr Town from 1920-21 (as member of the original Third Division) to 1929-30. With optimism fading for the established three professional clubs, non-league Merthyr may serve as a growing light for club soccer in Wales.

BROOKING REPORT

The second of Trevor Brooking's EXCLUSIVE columns. Every month the former West Ham and England star will comment on the club and international scene in the UK and Ireland.

BRAZIL TEST LOOKS IDEAL

Brazil's Wembley visit is good for England's World Cup preparations.

ON March 28 our World Cup managers Bobby Robson, Jack Charlton and Andy Roxburgh play their first competitive fixtures since qualification was clinched, and the draw made.

The pairing of the Irish Republic and England in June meant their proposed match in Dublin was cancelled, and England have been lucky to arrange a Wembley visit by Brazil. It should prove a useful test and experience for the players who rarely sample the South American style of play.

It will be the first of a series of matches before June, during which Bobby Robson must balance his selection between successful results and the need to try new players. It would be a major surprise if he switched away from his favour 4-4-2 system, so for such a prestigious match I expect him to start with his strongest side, as he did against Italy in November.

This will leave the match in April against Czecholslovalia as the more likely opportunity for the fringe players to impress. So where are the possible openings.

Peter Shilton is undoubtedly first choice goalkeepr, while Chris Woods and David Seaman have an equal chance of clinching the understudy spot. The expected back four against Brazil of Gary Stevens, Des Walker, Terry Butcher and Stuart Pearce will take some shifting, with perhaps the full backs more vulnerable.

Utility players Paul Parker, Ian Snodin, Paul Lake and Michael Thomas could all hope for a chance on the right, while the more specialist Tony Dorigo and Nigel Winterburn are the challengers on the left.

With David Rocastle unable to find his best form Chris Waddle and John Barnes look comfortable as the flank selections.

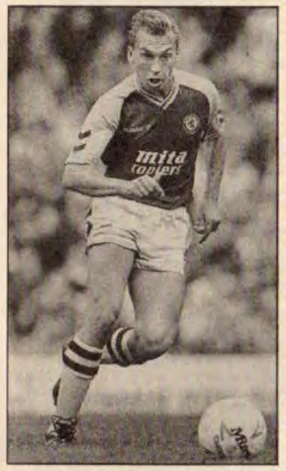
It is probably the centre midfield positions which are giving Bobby Robson most concern, with first choices Bryan Robson and Neil Webb recovering from lengthy injuries. His captain's absence following a hernia operation must be a real worry, as in England's last match against Yugoslavia his goalscoring performance was the difference between the two sides.

McMahon has been a regular recently, and so his partner could be anyone from Hodge, Platt, Thomas, Phelan or Gascoigne.

Current form suggests Hodge or Platt would offer the usual balance, but many will expect the gifted but unpredictable Gazza to be given his chance. Up front Gary Lineker and Peter Bearsley have been in outstanding club form and warrant another chance to recapture their understanding of old.

Of the challengers only the adapable Platt has kept his form, and I will be disappointed if Kwerry Dixon continues to be left out of the squad.

The Republic of Ireland should have a good outing against Wales, with John Sheridan and Bernie Slaven possible newcomers to the team. It might also give an indication whether midfield or defence is the role Jack Charlton intends for PaulMcGrath.



Villa's David Platt.

Sweeper

I believe Scotland are the least reliable of the three, and unimpressive displays in recent months gives every incentive for anyone showing exceptional form to expect selection. Their match with Argentina will be equally demanding and an interesting look at the World Cup holders.

Scotland have experimented at times with a sweeper system and it will be another discussion point in their build-up; if they wish to persevere or abandon that.

THE league championship race continues to carry Aston Villa along on a wave of optimism, and they remain the major threat to Liverpool. Their success will depend on their ability to win consistently away from home, which is something that is proving elusive for champions Arsenal, and the reason they are not at the top themselves.

London are in danger of losing two of their contingent in the First Division as Charlton and Millwall struggle towards the bottom of the table.

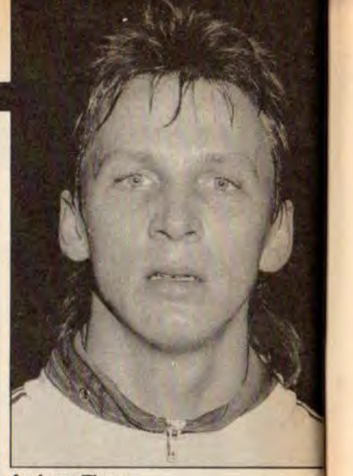
In Scotland Rangers cruise comfortably towards the Premier Championship as Aberdeen, Hearts and Celtic all falter in matches they should be winning.

VOTING forms the PFA Player and Young Player of the season will have been returned by now, with Aston Villa and Southampton players in contention for both awards.

Realistically Matthewe Le Tissier and Rodney Wallace will be main challengers for the young award, against the Villa trio of David Platt, Tony Daley and Ian Olney. The versatile Platt has had such an influential season he should pick up plenty of votes for the main award too.

WEST GERMANY BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

Germans fly back to the action



Andreas Thom

THE West German championship resumed at the end of February after a ten-week winter break. This doesn't mean that the clubs were idle throughout that period. Most allowed their players only a fortnight's holiday before they re-started training.

Subsequently, the majority took part in some of the 14 indoor tournaments staged between December 27 and January 28, while nearly all travelled to sunnier climes, including such exotic locations as Costa Rica, Japan, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Perhaps the most tiring expedition was undertaken by champions Bayern Munich who visited the USA (Los Angeles) during nine days and then jetted to Japan for five days. Most players complained of the stress, but as international midfielder Hansi Dorfner admitted: "For £170,000 even a club like Bayern can't turn down the opportunity."

Bayern were one of the few clubs who did not take advantage of the transfer period being extended till January 31. Earlier this season striker Jurgen Wegmann (to Borussia Dortmund) and the Norwegian international defender Erland Johnsen (to Chelsea) left the club.

The three most prominent recent transfers in the Bundesliga were those of the East German international forward Andreas Thom (Dynamo Berlin to Bayer Leverkusen), midfielder Norbert Meier (Werder Bremen to Borussia Moenchengladbach) and of striker Wolfram Wuttke (Kaiserslautern to Espanol Barcelona, on loan).

Rejected

A foreign import which fell through was that of Scottish striker Charlie Nicholas from Aberdeen who was sought by Karlsruher. But after team manager Winfried Schafer saw the 1-0 defeat at St. Mirren, where Nicholas touched the ball only eight times before being substituted in the 65th minute, the Germans were only thinking in terms of a loan till the end of the season. This was, however, rejected by Aberdeen.

Three South Americans will hopefully enrich the Bundesliga. The Brazilian Fernando Pinho "Nando" from Flamengo Rio moved to Hamburg, the Argentinian Marcello Carracedo from Atlanta Buenos Aires is now with Fortuna Dusseldorf while Rodolfo Cardoso joined Homburg from Estudiantes de La Plata.

But the biggest sensation caused the transfer of Andreas Thom (24), capped 50 times by East Germany, the first footballer to be officially released to a West German club. He became a professional, but will keep his East German nationality for the time being. Neither Dynamo Berlin, nor Bayer Leverkusen wanted to reveal the exact transfer fee, but sources close to the West Germany club put it at £1 million; the contract is for 2.5 years, while his earnings are estimated to be £130,000 per year and he won't have to give up any of his wages to the East German FA. A clause in his contract demands his release for all competitive internationals.

Other clubs too are showing great interest in the players from the other German state.

Another East European transferred to a Bundesliga club was the Czechoslovak international striker Ivo Knoflicek, 27, who is now playing for St. Pauli. The 27-times capped player defected together with his national team partner Lubos Kubik, in 1988 when with Slavia Prague during a trip to West Germany.

After a brief stay in Belgium the two were whisked off to Spain by an agent acting on behalf of the British multi-millionaire and publisher Robert Maxwell, himself a refugee from Czechoslovakia in 1940. As chairman of Derby County he hoped to sign up both players, apparently without having to pay a transfer fee.

When this affair fell through, Knoflicek was stranded in the West, but he made his peace with the Czechoslovak authorities who granted him the transfer to St Pauli for a relatively modest £200,000.

Borussia Dortmund secured the services of the former 13 times capped Soviet defender Sergej Gorlukovitch, 28, from Lokomotiv Moscow who cost about £333,000.

Favourites for the league championship title are the holders Bayern Munich despite the fact that the two foreign strikers have been such big disappointments.

SOVIET UNION BY BOB VAUGHAN

Cherenkov wins the vote

FYODOR CHERENKOV, the Spartak playmaker, is the 1989 Footballer of the Year.

Best represented in the team of the season are Dynamo Kiev with Bessonov, Kuznetzov, Bal, Mikhailichenko, Litovchenko and Protasov. Cherchessov gets the goalkeeping spot, his colleagues at Spartak – Rodionov and Cherenkov – have places and Gorlukovitch (Lok Moscow) and Dobrovolski (Dynamo Moscow) complete the side.

Kiev's manager is, of course, also in the news. On return from his Italian 'holiday' Valeri Lobanovski denied that he would be signing a contract south of the Alps. He indicated at the presentation of medals to the Dynamo players for coming third in the league in 1989 that he, in fact, wishes to stay as manager in Kiev.

After his sacking some seven years ago from the national team post, 'Loba' was banned for life from being responsible for the 'Sbornaja'.

Was he therefore working illegally? The State Ministry of Sport decision in 1983 is apparently still valid but Valeri The Great is happy that there is no contract between him and the Federation, an arrangement which also means he is not paid.

He is a popular man in the Ukraine, Kiev will not be sorry if remaining in charge there is what he does, especially as there is nobody of the same calibre to replace him.

Dynamo left, with 'Loba' in charge for the annual winter squad training in their old haunt, Ruit, in south Germany.

New status

Meanwhile in Moscow Goskomsport was drawing up the Federation's new status along the lines of its own rather than the progressives' thinking.

All football would come under the Federation including the various leagues, which almost certainly means paid and unpaid and the outmanoeuvering of the 'Union' which the 'professionals' and leading clubs wanted to run top soccer.

The idea is that the state would no longer control football but, how strange, none of the officials involved or hardly any are being put out to grass. Koloskov has been re-elected federation president, Tukmanov is back as vice-president and Paramonov as secretary general.

EAST GERMANY

EAST GERMANY'S national team made an unfortunate start to 1990, in Kuwait.

Friendlies had been arranged there with the hosts and France who saw off Eduard Geyer's men 3-0. 'I thought we could do better than that!' he remarked.

In fairness he was without Stahmann, Kreer, Lindner, Schoessler and Trautmann whereas Michel Platini's squad was at full strength apart from the absent Papin.

Of more local interest, certainly to fans in Berlin, was the meeting between Hertha and Union in the Olympic Stadium. Some 60,000 from East and West attended an out of season friendly between the two respective second division promotion-chasers.

Inter-Berlin

It was not an important friendly to some extent but an opportunity for fans to get together for an inter Berlin game, the like of which had not been seen since March 31, 1962 when there was but briefly a chink in the Wall. On that occasion Hertha defeated Union 10-1. Only 557 spectators bothered but this time it was all so different with the Post Office prepared to sponsor the game and pay in advance for 70,000 tickets.

This time Hertha were content with a 2-1 win but Sirocks's strike for Hertha and Greiser's consolation for Union were worth the trip; 35,000 visitors from the GDR thought so anyway. A return is planned before the 1990/91 season opens.

Not on, however, is the planned East-West August friendly in Leipzig now that the two Germanies meet in the 1992 European Championships.

SPAIN

Barcelona slipping away

'Keeper Zaki

BARCELONA slipped further behind Real Madrid in the title race when they went down 3-2 in a controversial visit to the Bernabeu.

Aloisio and Ronald Koeman were shown the red card, as was troubled coach Johan Cruyff.

Koeman had problems in the previous game as well – missing his first penalty of the season as Barcelona who dropped two places to fourth behind Atletico Madrid and Valencia who both won to stay six points clear of the leaders.

Real Madrid had an easy 3-0 away win the previous evening against lowly Cadiz, whom they had also beaten 1-0 in a Spanish Cup semi-final that week.

Luck deserted Barcelona at the Camp Nou after they went ahead in the first minute when midfielder Guillermo Amor collected a long pass from Eusebio Sacristan and outpaced the Mallorca defence to score.

Koeman missed a chance to make it 2-0 in the 62nd minute when Mallorca's Moroccan goalkeeper Zaki saved his penalty.

Mallorca, who surprisingly drew with Real Madrid the previous week, pulled level with a penalty by Rafael Garcia in the 81st minute after Claudio Barragan was brought down by Koeman and Ricardo Serna.

Atletico Madrid took advantage of Barcelona's blunders to leapfrog into second place thanks to a 2-0 win over Bilbao. Their goals came in the first and last minutes. Brazilian striker Baltazar de Morais opened the scoring with a penalty and Antonio Orejuela added the second.

SWITZERLAND BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

Bojidar Iskrenov

SWISS team managers lead, by comparison with their colleagues in neighbouring countries, a charmed life.

Statistics show that while over the past ten years in Italy 35 coaches had been dismissed, in Austria 46 and in West Germany 57, only 20 Swiss team bosses had left their clubs.

Of course, in West Germany and in Italy the First Division is bigger, but even on proportional calculation the Swiss have a better record of keeping their managers. Of those who left this season in Switzerland, only two were from the First Division, both foreigners. The Yugoslav Velibor Vasovic (Bellinzona) and the Swede Tord Grip (Young Boys Berne).

The Austrian team chief of the surprise league leaders St. Gallen, Kirt Jara, explains: "The standards of team management in Swiss football are very high. Here the clubs would rather engage experts than cheaper managers who usually fail. But most importantly, the level of expectation and thus the stress is not as great in this country as elsewhere."

Gates were up in the Nationalliga A (First Division) by 46,200 or 5 per cent. The total for the 132 games was 959,850 for an average of 7,260 per match – last year it was 6,910. There are 16 sendings off, compared with 15 the year before and only 8 in 1987.

St. Gallen finished ahead of Xamax Neuchatel by one point (28-27) at the top, but because the uneven points totals are rounded off upwards, both clubs have started the championship play-off with the same number of halved points!

The unluckiest player in the country is Beat Sutter (27) a striker with Xamax, capped 39 times, still out of action. In nine years Sutter has had to undergo seven operations on various parts of the body.

A most interesting transfer was completed by Lausanne who signed the 50 times capped Bulgarian centre forward Bojidar Iskrenov (27), who scored 125 goals for Vitosha Sofia and 19 for the national side. He rejected other offers, including one from Manchester United.

ITALY BY JANE NOTTAGE

Evani is Milan's part-time hero

MIDFIELDER Alberigo Evani is Milan's substitute hero.

He came off the bench and set up two goals to inspire Milan's 3-0 top-of-the-table victory over Napoli. Milan thus pulled level on 36 points. The same day, defending champions Internazionale of Milan drew 1-1 at Roma, while Sampdoria were held 0-0 by Genoa in the Genoa derby.

The 3-0 win over Napoli was a welcome measure of revenge for Arrigo Sacchi's men. Milan lost to Diego Maradona and company by the same score at Napoli in November. This time only some fine saves by Napoli goalkeeper Giuliano Giuliani defied Milan in the first half.

It took them only a minute to score, however, when play resumed. Evani, who came into the game at 34 minutes to replace injured teammate Roberto Donadoni, lofted a high, looping cross into the Napoli penalty area and Milan forward Daniele Massaro headed Milan into the lead.

Captain

At 70 minutes, Evani provided his second assist of the match, with Paolo Maldini heading home.

Milan's Dutch striker Marco Van Basten added a third goal with four minutes left to play. Van Basten leads the first division scorers with 15 goals.

In Rome, Inter took the lead after 10 minutes thanks to a 25-yard drive from West German forward Jurgen Klinsmann. Spectacular goalkeeping by Inter's Walter Zenga kept Roma from scoring in the first half. But in the 50th minute, they equalised when captain Giuseppe Giannini touched a free kick for West German defender Thomas Berthold to let fly. Zenga managed to block the shot, but the rebound was pushed home by Roma defender Antonio Tempestilli.

In Turin, Juventus coach Dino Zoff had instant success when he substituted Pierluigi Casiraghi in for Soviet midfielder Alexander Zavarov in the second half against Lazio. Casiraghi immediately collected a perfectly timed pass from Portuguese winger Rui Barros, to score the only goal.

Juventus are now in fourth place with 31 points, just one point behind Inter and Sampdoria.

HUNGARY BY BRIAN O'SULLIVAN

Meszoly takes it on the chin

KALMAN MESZOLY, back as manager of Hungary, put on a brave face after seeing his country drawn in the same European group as Italy, the Soviet Union (who, strangely, were not seeded), Norway and Cyprus.

He said: "I'm not very happy with the draw but it looks to me that Hungarians will see some exciting games in Budapest because Italy and the Soviet Union are world-class."

Already, this can be interpreted as an echo of what Jozsef Verebes, the coach of MTK-VM, uttered when his club was eliminated from the UEFA Cup by Dynamo Kiev. "A useful defeat," was the euphemism used.

The media made one general conclusion: Hungary has no chance of qualifying and will take part only in a race for fourth position.

Tamas Petres, last season's leading goal-scorer, was prevented from travelling to West Germany to be present at the Golden Boot ceremony following a disagreement with his club, Videoton. However, Gyula Hajszan, after a career spent exclusively at Raba ETO, was being transferred to Duisburg, the West German second division club, for 100,000 after a trial.

The case of Bertalan Bicskei, the dismissed former national team manager, is in the Hungarian court. By Hungarian law he would appear to have a case; but the contract of a national team manager is based on a certain amount of success being achieved.

Bicskei, unfortunately, cannot argue from a position of strength.

FRANCE BY ANDRE DUCLOS

Monaco's Weah is African Footballer of the Year

GEORGES WEAH, the 23-year-old Monaco striker, has become the first Liberian ever to become African Footballer of the Year. And he is mourning the lack and loss of Glenn Hoddle.

Scarcely had the lithe and leggy Weah been given his award than he was saying how much he hoped Glenn Hoddle would soon be back. Hoddle, he said, had been absolutely essential to his success, giving him the service that he needed. Alas, as we all know, Hoddle was just about to break down in a fitness test, which would decree that he missed the whole of the season. Indeed, you wonder if and when he will ever play, again.

Weah's triumph has been swift and remarkable. Weah says that everything changed in Nigeria after Samual Doe, an Air Force NCO, came to power in a coup. Doe was a great football fan, took a keen interest in the game, and sent promising players to Brazil, for nearly a couple of years at a time, to perfect their play.

After playing for several Monrovian clubs, Weah was wafted away from Liberia to the Cameroons, where he played for Tonnerre Yaounde and might easily have bcome naturalised, were it not for the intervention of the veteran French coach, long years in Africa, Claude Le Roy. It was on his recommendation that Weah found his way to Monaco where, when Hateley was injured, he gained his regular place in attack. Another splendid African attacker, Youssouf Fofana from the Ivory Coast, was installed at outside-left.

Support

With his pace, swerve and direct approach, Weah has been a great success with club and country. Indeed, he scored the goal whereby Liberia actually beat powerful Egypt in the World Cup qualifying rounds. He is an immensely amiable fellow who says he likes all human beings, never quarrels with anybody. He was very pleased that his Ghanian friend Pele – the No. 10 he places second only to his beloved Hoddle! – should take fourth place in the African poll. Pele now plays for Lille, having it was said been squeezed out at Marseille by Jean-Pierre Papin. Who, however, has been a tremendous support for Chris Waddle.

Waddle, says the young Marseille manager, Gerard Gili, has never been playing so splendidly. And Hoddle's great pal, Graham Rix, is back again at last for Caen, after a nasty injury to his left ankle which had put the poor fellow out since early in October.

So he can resume his partnership at Caen with Brian Stein. Ricky Hill, meanwhile – for so long a colleague of Stein at Luton Town – thoroughly enjoyed the brief English tour made by his Second Division club, Le Havre, of the South of England. Le Havre actually lost to Crystal Palace reserves, there was a lively charity game at Luton in which Hill played for both sides, and a victory at last at Aldershot.

Hill impressed on the Le Havre players the extent of the English team's physical commitment. He didn't need to impress it on Byrne, the former QPR and Ireland striker, whose goals won the game at Aldershot.

The French tour in Kuwait, during the mid season break, seems to have thrown up a useful new asset; little Remi Garde, of Lyon. And how he has fought back, this little midfielder, after appalling injuries, severe operations, which would have demoralised a lesser man.

Two ruptures of the cruciate ligaments of the knee. Two operations in consequence, one at age 18, one at age 19. Leaving great scars across the poor fellow's knees. One knee damaged, the left, then the right. Both in Third Division reserve games for Lyon. Who would have put money on him then to come bouncing back, and reach the French international team? It helped him, though, says Garde, to gain a wider perspective, while he was recuperating, on how the game should be played. Morning noon and – one is tempted to say night – he worked on his rehabilitating exercises. He doesn't feel a twinge, now.

At the start of last season, Raymond Domenech and Bernard Lacombe arrived to take over at Lyon, and things began to improve. Garde quickly won his place in what was then a second division team, helped them to promotion, and has kept it ever since. He is a thoughtful young man, well aware of the prospect of letting football, dangerously, dominate one's life. This not only harms one, he feels, as a rounded human being, but doesn't do one any good as a footballer, either. But, "To play football is fabulous. We haven't the right to be sad or morose."

Pascal Vahirua, the little Tahitian left winger who plays for Auxerre, was in Kuwait with the French team, too. He never expected to be capped, he said. He didn't dare go home during the winter break, he says, because there would have been parties, parties every day, with all the possible ill effects.

Climate

Coming to France initially, at 16 was, he said, an alarming experience. There were so many differences to digest; not least in the climate. His mother didn't want him to go. His father, who had been a footballer – from whom, he says he derives his dribbling abilities – was all in favour of his going. So he went.

Talking of Auxerre's foreign-born players, Enzo Scifo had to abandon any hope of returning to the Belgian national side in a friendly against Sweden because Auxerre needed him. Whether the selector, Walter Meeuws, would even have picked Scifo is a moot point. He actually stormed off home without even putting on a track suit on the occasion of the recent, lost, friendly against Greece.

Georges Weah.

ALBANIA

Nentori are halfway leaders

CHAMPIONS Nentori resumed after the winter break at the top of the table, thanks mainly to the contributions of their veteran strikers Minga and Kola.

Second placed Dinamo Tirana are enjoying a successful season with talented midfielder Demollari as influential as ever. Tucked in just behind them are Partizani Tirani and Flamurtari Vlora, who have improved after inconsistent starts. The latter have looked particularly strong in attack, where Kushta and Bubeqi have been in fine form.

The championship is contested in three stages. At the end of the second stage the top side plays six matches at home and five matches away. Their home games are against those clubs in second to seventh positions, while away fixtures are against those in eighth to twelfth spots.

The side in second place are at home to those teams in third to eighth positions, while their away games are against those clubs ranked from ninth to twelfth, plus the top side.

The Albanian federation this year organised a Supercup between last year's League champions 17 Nentori, and Cup holders Dinamo Tirana, who won 2-0. The goals came from Abazi and a penalty from Demollari.

HOLLAND BY SIMON KUPER

Don't be fooled by Dutch deputies

Marco Van Basten.

HOLLAND'S defeat at home to Brazil just before Christmas gives a false impression of both sides. The result led a lot of people to say that Brazil would win the World Cup and that Holland had no chance. Bobby Robson, for one, spoke dismissively of the Dutch after the match.

He should know better. The only thing the game proved was that Brazil's second team is stronger than Holland's third team. We now know that Holland are weak without Gullit, Rijkaard, Van Basten, Vanenburg and Erwin Koeman (to mention but a few of the absentees). No surprise, surely.

Even though the match was meaningless, it weakened Thijs Libregts's position. Already, his predecessor Rinus Michels had been appointed as his "adviser". Michels is far more popular with Holland's players and fans than Libregts, and the board is just waiting for its chance to give him full control over the national team. Michels replaced Kees Rijvers as Holland's manager in 1984 after a similar run of events.

After Holland's defeat against Brazil, the Telegraaf newspaper claimed that it was Libregts' fault that Van Basten and Rijkaard had refused to play in the match. The paper argued that the players would have turned out for Michels.

The story is as follows: Van Basten and Rijkaard flew to Holland before the World Club cup final in Tokyo, arriving just before the match. Initially, their club Milan had forbidden them to play against Brazil, but while the Dutchmen were on the plane the Milanese decided to give permission after all. The snag was that Van Basten and Rijkaard, tired and jet-lagged, did not want to play. The Dutch FA asked them to come to Holland's training camp, but the players ignored the request and went to stay with their families instead.

Libregts and Michels were furious, but there was nothing they could do – it is out of the question to drop Van Basten and Rijkaard. Nevertheless, relationships within the team are sure to worsen.

There would have been no arguments had Holland's makeshift side played well. All the new players brought into the team failed. Bart Latuheru, Edward Sturing and Frank Berghuis played badly in their first and probably last international. Only Martin Laamers had a pleasing debut, but even he showed the gap that exists between Holland's best and second-best.

Laamers, Latuheru and Sturing all play for Vitesse Arnhem. Libregts (or is it Michels?) was attracted to them by Vitesse's swift rise. The club were promoted to the premier division last season and are now in third place, only fractionally behind PSV and Ajax. Volendam (Frank Berghuis' club), Roda Kerkrade and Twente Enschede are also close to the top two.

Average

The decline has narrowed because they have weakened, not because the other sides have improved. Yet fans like the league's new equality. "I used to know, when I went to watch Ajax, that they would win easily," an Ajax supporter told me. "Now I'm never sure, and it's much more exciting."

Average attendances at premier division matches have risen from 7,358 last season to 7,987 this year. Even though Ajax are weaker now than last year, their attendances have risen from 9,450 to 14,100.

Ajax are hoping that their old rivals Feyenoord will recover from their unprecedented decline. Feyenoord are currently third from bottom in the premier division and in serious danger of relegation. This season Ajax-Feyenoord drew only 23,000 fans: the usual figure is 60,000. Also, the temporary end of the rivalry has taken the spice out of the league. That is why, at Ajax-NEC last month, the Amsterdam crowd hardly cheered when it heard that Feyenoord were losing to RKC.

BELGIUM BY IAIN MACLEOD

Mechelen's first defeat follows Krol sacking

MECHELEN followed up the dismissal of coach Ruud Krol with a further upset – a 3-0 defeat by league leaders Brugge.

That was the European Cup quarter-finalists' first defeat of the season – Krol, whatever his other failings, having sealed the defence effectively.

However, Krol, who commuted to and from Paris at one stage was not sufficiently familiar with Belgian football to gain the widespread confidence required. His lack of knowledge in that department was one of the dismissal reasons cited by president John Cordier.

Cordier, the dynamic businessman who has taken Mechelen from second division obscurity to European trophy winners in less than six years saw in Krol the charismatic character he believed a club like Mechelen needed. Now, he says, the Dutchman was too inexperienced.

Mechelen's decision to sever its link with Krol came immediately after a disastrous cup exit at the hands of Lokeren. Mechelen's 2-1 triumph in the second leg fell one goal short of levelling the tie after Lokeren had earlier won 3-1. It was the straw that was to prove Krol's undoing.

With thoughts set on achieving European Cup glory, Cordier realised that stagnation had set in and made Krol the scapegoat, saying: "We are convinced that he does not fulfil our demands, although that does not meen he's a bad coach."

Ruud Krol.

Mechelen's inconsistency on the domestic front does not auger well for the match with Milan, which is likely to take place at the Heysel stadium in Brussels – the European match since the disaster at the 1985 European Cup final. With such attractive opponents, Mechelen felt that their compact 14,000 capacity stadium was too small to cope with the enormous demand for tickets.

When the title race resumed two of the top three, Anderlecht and Mechelen, were in action.

For championship aspirants Anderlecht, the signals they sent out following a five-goal romp at Waregem were clear enough; at Gent, meanwhile even Krol's dismissal failed to remove the aura of deja vu surrounding Mechelen as they finished another tedious ninety minutes in which they had failed to score – their 10th draw in 18 outings.

The following day, Brugge, the season's surprise package, had the opportunity to emphasise their calibre when they entertained much-improved Standard Liege. Victory by the odd goal in three gave Club two vital points to stay just behind Anderlecht on goal difference.

Rivals

The next weekend's fixtures were always going to be a test of Anderlecht's confidence when Antwerp, enjoying a marvellous run in Europe, were the visitors at Parc Astrid.

Nothing much went the way of the home side and, with the visitors always threatening on the break, it took a penalty from Lehnhoff to break the deadlock and, as it transpired, deprive the mauve and whites of the league leadership.

For with their closest rivals losing at home. Brugge gaining in confidence with each passing week, took advantage to clear at the top courtesy of a comfortable 3-0 win away to Kortrijk.

With both Anderlecht and Mechelen now faced with the added pressure of European competition, Brugge's prospects of winning the title are better than they have been for a number of years.

YUGOSLAVIA BY ROBERT ALEXANDER

TRANSFERS and talk of financial crises grabbed all the headlines in Yugoslavia during the winter break as some of the bigger clubs slipped away to enjoy sunshine tours abroad.

Virtually every club other than Red Star, Partizan, Dinamo Zagreb and Hajduk Split was reported to be feeling the pressure with many looking seriously at ways of raising revenue from other sources other than football.

Among the worst hit were Budocnost Titograd and Radnicki Nis. Budocnost were forced to sell the higly-talented Predrag Mijatovic to Partizan and to accept another offer from Red Star for international goalkeeper Dragoj Lekovic.

Red Star will not be able to play Lekovic until next June. Budocnost admitted that if it were not for the transfers, theclub would have been in serious trouble. Radnicki's manager Pantelic admitted he had been forced to release players simply to reduce the squad and wage bill.

Money, however, continues to come into the Yugoslav game thanks to the sort of transfer deal which will see Dragan Stojkovic move to Marseill in the summer. The 24-year-old midfield star will earn Red Star a cool 5 million fee.

And the Yugoslav Federation has done its bit too, having negotiated a fee of 45,00 to appear in a warm-up match in Bordeaux at the end of January.

AUSTRIA BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

Luckless Krems pipped at post

AUSTRIAN football awoke from its customary winter hibernation with great expectations at club and international level.

The championship play-offs are now being contested by the top eight, FC Tirol, FK Austria, Admira/Wacker, Rapid, Sturm Graz, First Vienna, Austria Salzburg and St. Polten. These teams took half the points total with them from the so-called 'qualifying round' which was played over 22 games – 14 matches have remained to decide the champions, which should come from the leading four.

But spare a thought for Krems, so unlucky in the closing stages of the first phase. The provincials from the wine country, demolished title contenders Admira/Wacker by 5-0 and the champions Tirol by 3-0 away, yet missed the top eight by just one point. It was incidentally Tirol's only setback in the initial stage of the programme.

Manager Ernst Happel was so incensed over the ineptitude of his team that he didn't even join his players in the dressing room. Instead he took off in his Mercedes for a holiday in Vienna.

While in Krems there was despondency, in St. Polten the locals celebrated their team climbing to 8th place, the last in the top pool. Led by the famous Argentinian Mario Kempes, now 35, the 1978 "world champion", they stormed to a 3-0 win over Vorwarts Steyr.

In the coming weeks the attention of the fans will also be directed at FK Austria and their latest scoring sensation the young Hannes Pleva who hit four goals in the 5-0 away rout over bottom-placed Grazer AK.

Champions Tirol remain the most popular club every one of their matches attracted over 10,000 fans.

As Player of the Year the club managers chose Gerhard Rodax (24) from Admira/Wacker for his 27 goals in 22 games. Rodax finished ahead of his national team rivals Andy Ogris and Toni Polster and could become the first Austrian to win the European 'Golden Boot' since Hans Krankl in 1978.

GREECE

ONE of the top Greek clubs of all time – Olympiakos Piraeus – are in serious financial trouble.

Despite entering the new decade on top of the First Division table along with AEK, Panathinaikos and PAOL, Olympiakos are having trouble meeting financial obligations.

The club received further bad news in the first week of January when a court ordered the seisure of the Bank of Crete which was owned by fugitive banker George Koskotas who is pending extradition hearings and has been charged with embezzling £200 million. When Koskotas and his money was around, Olympiakos was going well. Now...

National Finance Minister George Yennimatas met the General Secretary of Sport, Stelios Sfakianakis, in an effort to help Olympiakos.

Olympiakos has asked that the court hold off on its seisure order because the club right now owes more than 80 million drachmas in back taxes, nearly 10 million drachmas in players' wages, another 30 million drachmas owed to three players, some 3 million drachmas to the state insurance fund, another 5 million drachmas to third parties and some 10 million drachmas to players as bonuses.

The new year was introduced with the same two negative aspects which plagued 1989 – hooliganism and poor attendances.

Violence was reported at three matches the first week of January with Olympiakos fans doing most of the damage at the home of Panionios. The match ended 0-0.

There was also violence between AEK fans and Livadiakos fans at the latter's stadium with the riot police separating the hooligans. There was ill feeling weeks before the match between the two clubs as the two presidents had had a verbal battle of their own. AEK came away with a 1-0 victory to stay top of the league table.

The first matches of 1990 saw a total attendance figure of 45,555 for the nine First Division contests, a bit more than half of the Olympic Stadium capacity.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

FROM ERIC WEIL

ONE MATCH IS ENOUGH FOR VASCO

VASCO da Gama, of Rio de Janeiro, won the Brazilian national title for the second time – they were champions in 1974 –- with a 1-0 victory over Sao Paulo FC on the latter's ground and will represent Brazil in the 1990 Libertadores Cup together with Gremio of Porto Alegre who had won the 1989 Brazilian Cup earlier. Sorato headed the only goal after 50 minutes.

Only one match was necessary to decide the title between the winners of the two groups. Vasco da Gama obtained one more point (24 in 18 games) than Sao Paulo so that they took a bonus point into the final series and the first team to total three points took the title.

Sao Paulo: Gilmar, Neto, Adilson, Ricardo, Nelsinhi, Flavia, Bobo, Rai, Mario, Tilico, Ney, Edivaldo.

Vasco da Gama: Acacio, Luis Carlos Winck, Quinonez, Marco Aurelio, Mazinho, Ze do Carmo, Marcio Antonio Boiadeiro, Willian, Bismarck, Bebeto, Sorato.

Although the 16 teams in the second stage of the Brazilian championship were split into two groups, they played teams from the other group and the final day was dramatic with eight teams still having a chance to take top places in their groups. Vasco did it with a 2-0 win over Internacional of Porto Alegre, helped by an outstanding performance and both goals from Bebeto. In Sao Paulo's 1-0 victory over Portuguesa, winger Edivaldo was their outstanding player and the scorer of the only goal 10 minutes from the end.

Bebeto played an important part in Vasco's Championship success.

Vasco da Gama, with eight players in the national squad, also have Ecuador's international back, Holger Quinones – considered Ecuador's top player – in their line-up.

In the next to last match, Flamengo – then already out of contention – gained a surprisingly easy 5-0 victory over classic Rio rivals Fluminense (who finished bottom of their group) with Zico playing his last match before retirement for the winners and scoring his 728th career goal.

ECUADOR: Barcelona needed only a draw with Deportivo Quito on the latter's field on the final day of the final round of the second stage of the first division tournament to regain the title they had lost to Emelec last year and they gained the equalizer with six minutes to go... but it did not count.

At that very moment fans invaded the field and the referee suspended the match, noting the result at the time of suspension on the match form as 1-0 to Deportivo Quito. Meanwhile Emelec beat Nacional 4-2 to make sure of one of the two top places which puts them into the 1990 Libertadores Cup. The other place depended on the unfinished match.

A draw for Barcelona would put them in, but if Deportivo Quito won they would replace them.

The FA's disciplinary committee took five hours to decide that the remaining six minutes had to be played, backed by pressure from Emelec.

It suited Emelec for Deportivo Quito to finish as 1-0 winners as they would then finish top of the table (on goal difference) and get a chance to play off for the title with Barcelona who won the first stage.

If Barcelona drew the game – and there was talk of a replay – they would finish at the top of the final round and become automatic champions by virtue of also having won the first stage. A week later the FA ordered the whole match to be replayed.

Both Barcelona dn Deportivo Quito are coached by Argentines – Miguel Angel Brindisi and Oscar Malbernat respectively.

Filanbanco, sponsored by a bank, who finished bottom of the final round, had earlier released their foreign players – Uruguayans Luis Acosta and Julio Jimenez and Brazilian Toninho Vieira – to reduce costs as soon as they were out of contention.

ARGENTINA: Independiente, the current champions, overtook River Plate to finish the first half ot eh championship with a one-point lead. But both clubs, who are incidentally in this year's Libertadores Cup, also qualify for a four-team play-off at the end of the season for a 1991 cup place if they do not qualify as champions.

River Plate led until the last day but, as mentioned before, with very pragmatic performances of the kind which took Independiente to last season's title. So far it has been a tournament with a lot of midfield play, a lot of draws (41%) and few goals (an average of two per game).

The final day also breought the average number of off-field incidents. One of the 10 games – between Cordoba rivals Talleres and Instituto – was suspended shortly before the end when a player was hit by a stone thrown from the stands.

Over 300 fans were arrest in the Rosario derby between Central and Newell's Old Boys and the Platense-Gimnasia y Esgrima clash also produced battles between fans and police...some real Christmas spirit. The soccer, as for most of this first half of the season, was also poor.

URUGUAY: Progreso, a small club from a poor workers suburb of Montevideo, won the Uruguayan first division for the first time losing only one of their 12 matches. They clinched the title with two games to go and ended up with a five-point lead over Nacional.

The 1989 championship was played in only one round this year – with each ofthe 13 clubs meeting the other jsut once – due to its late start after World Cup qualifying game and to finish it quickly to be able to give preference to the national team's preparations for theWorld Cup finals.

It was the third year running that neither of the big clubs – Nacional and Penarol – won the tie and this has, of course, never happened before in professional soccer since of the 57 titles, Penarol have won 29, Nacional 23, Defensor Sporting two and Central Espanol, Danubio and Progreso one each.

After the match in which Progreso beat Penarol 1-0 to clinch the title two weeks from the end two Progreso players had positive dope tests – Sergio Cid and Alejandro Larea. The former had been caught for the third time and was likely to be suspended for a lengthy period, but according to rules in Uruguay, only the player is punished and not his club so that they would not lose the points gained.

Little Danubio, the sensation of the previous season when they won the title and also the earlier Competencia Cup, could not repeat their good performances and just failed to finish among the top six which were due to play for the two places in the next Libertadores Cup. Qualifying for this mini-tourament are the "Competencia" Champions (Nacional) and the top five (apart from Nacional) in the first division.

If champions, Progreso, do not finish among the top two they have another chance of getting into the Libertadores Cup however in a playoff with the second placed team. The other teams in the cup qualifying tournament, known as Liguilla, are Penarol, erro, Bella Vista and Defensor Sporting.

Johnny Miquerio of Progreso and Diego Aguirre of Penarol finished as joint top first division scorers with seven goals.

Brazilian national title holders Vasco da Gama.

Earlier, Nacional won the year's only first division clash against classic rivals Penarol 2-0, a match which was followed by serious incidents among fans outside the stadium during which at least 11 peoplereceived bullet wounds, according to police.

COLOMBIA: It seems unlikely that there will be no more domestic championship soccer until after the World Cup in Colombia where last season's championship was suspended in the final stages when a referee was shot dead – by the Mafia who bet on results – in November.

Meanwhile one of the major clubs, America of Cali, has led the way in dismissing its entire playing staff and some employees until soccer is restarted. Other clubs were expected to follow suit.

There is also controversy over the creation of a referees committee completely separate from the league committee – one of the conditions se by the government for permitting the restarting of the championships. FA president, Leon Londono is dead against it and will not accept it.

Julio Cesar Falcioni, the Argentine goalkeepr who has been on the books of America for years, was named "goalkeeper of the decade" in Colombia.

CHILE: Universidad Catolica and Colo Colo, both Santiago clubs, shared the lead with two-thirds of the Chilean first division over. Universidad, in spite of transferring leading international striker Lukas Tudor to Switzerland's Sion, have been getting good performances from two foreign players, recently acquired Peruvian defender Jose Del Solar and Argentinian midfielder Gerardo Reinoso.

Bottom club Rangers, meanwhile, had two players suspended for three months – Marcelo Bachino, an Argentine, and Pable Prieto – for giving positive drug control tests.

BOLIVIA: Eight teams have qualified for the quarter finals of the Bolivian Championship's second stage by taking the top four places in their groups – Real Santa Cruz, Oriente Petrolero (Santa Cruz), Bolivar, the champions, and Litoral (both from La Paz) from group A and The Strongest (La Paz), Jorge Wilsterman (Cochabamba), Blooming and Destroyers (both from Santa Cruz) from group B.

The winner was due to qualify for the next Libertadores Cup for which The Strongest have already qualified as winners of the first stage. If they win the second stage also, the second placed team will accompany them.

VENEZUELA: Maritimo won the Venezuela Cup with a 1-0 victory over League Champions Mineros de Guyana after a 3-3 draw with them in the first leg.

PERU: Universitario, Sporting Cristal, Union Huaral and defender Lima finished in the top four places of the De-centralized championship's Metropolitan zone to qualify for abn eight team final in which they were joined by Aurora (south zone winners), Minas San Vicente (central zone) and Colegio Nacional Iquitos (east zone) while the north zone winner was due to come out of the play off between Alianza Atletico, Torino, UTC and 15 de Setiembre.

Zico marked his last appearance for Flamengo with the 728th goal of his career.

CENTURY UP FOR ROSARIO CENTRAL

ROSARIO Central became the second current Argentine National A Division club to celebrate its 100th anniversary – on Christmas Eve. The club was founded in a bar in Rosario – a city 200 miles north of Buenos Aires – on December 24th, 1889 by a group of mostly British railway employees of the Central Argentine Railway.

From the start they were successful at soccer and as their fame grew outside the city the club's name was changed to Rosario Central in 1904.

It was only in 1939 however, when the Argentine FA decided to allow two Rosario clubs in to the first division that Rosario Central took up professional soccer but although always well known for their good play, they have frequently had to sell their best players to keep going. They won the National A Division title (replacing the first division) once, in season 1986-87, although they had previously won the watered down version of the national championship on three occasions.

Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata reached their 100th anniversary two years earlier

Politics is still the name of the game in Mexico

Guillermo Canedo.

Take for instance the governing body of the Mexican Federation called Femexfut. In the past 25 years an assortment of characters has passed as heads of the organisation, beginning with Guillermo Canedo who ruled cleverly, serving the intests of Televisa (then called Telesistema Mexicano), while at the same time wearing many hats: president of America of Mexico City, FIFA vice president, president of the organising committee of the 1970 World Cup, etc.

Incidentally, Canedo has not played any official role in Mexican soccer since 1971, and yet he is the only Mexican who is a FIFA vice president ... Currently, the head of Femexfut is Jesus Reynoso, an honest but very limited individual, always hesitating to make a decision, always wishing to be liked by everybody. As a consequence, two newcomers to Mexcian soccer, Emilio Maurer (Puebla) and Jose Antonia Garcia (Atlante), are running the show, telling Reynoso what to approve and what to reject. Yet the 1989-90 season has been an exciting one with fans attending the matches as never before. Partly this is due to the fact that the TV war has limited the number of television matches. Imevision, the state-owned network, is televising home games of Guadalajara, Puebla, Tigres, Pumas UNAM and Irapuato, but only outside the cities where those teams play. Televisa has refused to pay what Femexfut requested to televise other matches, but they in turn are taking advantage of the excellent international relations that Canedo has and are televising Spanish league matches, and the home matches of America and Necaxa, the two teams owned by them. This is against

FROM CARLOS RAMIREZ

Femexfut wishes, which so far has promoted the suspension for six months of the administrative managers of both teams. A weak and useless punishment.

With one third of the league games played thus far, local teams have lost one third of the points at home. Of the total victors, 40 per cent have been away trimphs – a record for Mexican soccer. This points to one fo the problems facing professional soccer in Mexico: how to reduce the number of first division teams from 20 to 18 and event to 16, in order to maintain standards. Professional soccer was officially established in Mexico during the 1943-44 season. Before that players were paid although they were offically classified as amateurs. In the 47 season that have followed, the number of teams has varied as follows:–

One season with 10 teams; three with 13; nine with 14; three with 15; eight with 16; four with 18; one with 21; and fifteen including the current one, with 20. The gradual increase from 10 to 20 occurred over a 25-year period. It is generally accepted that in converting from a country with only 32 urban centers of over 50,000 inhabitants (1950) to the present one with 76 urban centers of over 50,000, Mexico is capable of supporting professional soccer teams in many cities. However, the problem is the uneven distribution of teams in the three divisions.

So we have 13 different cities with first division teams and the 20 teams utilizing 16 different stadia. To this, add the Second Division promotional league covering 37 cities with 40 teams; and the third division with 60 teams playing 54 different cities.

REPORT FROM ASIA

BY BOB PATEMAN

Nissan are surprise finalists

Kamura – winner.

NISSAN, the Japanese giants with their Brazilian stars, defeated the home side Kuala Lumur to win a place in the Asian Club final.

Kuala Lumpur went into the four team group with considerable optimism, having just won the Malaysian cup final, and they started well enough, beating Fanja of Oman 2-0.

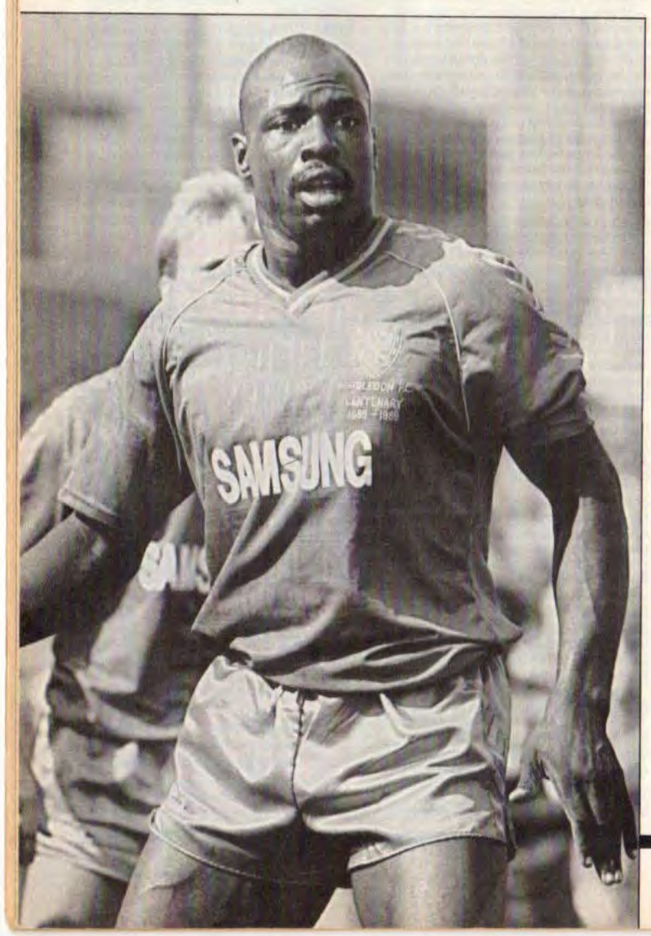
The second round, however, saw them come up against the well organised Japanese, who went ahead early in the second half through Masaaki Sakaida. Indeed the visitors might well have scored earlier had it not been for some brave goalkeeping from Rashid Hassan. Kannan equalized for KL in the 80th minute when an excellent pass left him only the goalkeeper to beat, but within seconds Nissan were back in front thanks to a goal from Kenita Hesagawa.

Nissan's final game was against Fanja, and although the Japanese looked more tense than in previous matches Kazushi Kimura scored the only goal to secure the group.

Their opponents in the final will be Liaoning of China, who emerged as winners of group B, staged in Jakarta. World Cup player Ma Lin was the man behind the Chinese success and he scored in the opening 2-0 defeat of Al-Shahin.

On the same day home side Pelita Jaya could only draw with Al-Rasheed. Pelita had gone ahead through Nurdianist but a second half equalizer from Nummuny gave the Iraq champions a point. Ma Lin was on target again in the second round, stealing the ball off Rully Nere and dribbling in to score the only goal of the game against Pelita.

The second day saw the biggest score of the tournament when Al-Rasheed enjoyed a one sided victory over Al-Shahin of Iran. Saad Noaman scored after just four minutes and they were three up at half time. Laith Shuhib, having hit their third goal, added two more in the second half as his side raced to a 5-0 victory.



Lai Sun are rumoured to be after Wimbledon giant John Gayle.

HONG KONG: Tony Morley, the former Aston Villa and England winger is back in town. He was flown out by See Bee, officially to watch the team and give technical advice, but while here he agreed to play in the league match with Eastern. He finished with two goals, both from penalties, as See Bee took a vital point from a 2-2 draw.

A few days later it was announced that Morley would be joining the club for the rest of the season. By returning to Hong Kong, Morley has passed up the opportunity of playing in Britain for Huddersfield.

Big spending Lai Sun are still looking for results and their aim is to find a big striker to work with John Spencer. John Gayle, the 6ft 4ins giant of Wimbledon, was one of the names being mentioned. The search for a striker has left Steve Walford's place in doubt, but struggling Sing Tao are said to be interested.

Valley have added to their trophies by taking the Camelpaint Challenge Shield. They defeated South China 2-1 in the final, with all three goals coming in the first half. Valley went ahead in the opening minute from Leung Nang-yan. Tempest equalized in the 41st minute and Bodak struck the winner seconds from half time.

MALAYSIA: New national team coach Chow Kwai Lam has said he will guarantee that Malaysia qualify for the next Olympics – but only if the games can be postponed till 1996. It was a comical way of summarizing the problems of developing the country's obvious potential. The coach, just fresh from his triumphs with Kuala Lumpur, said: "These are all players who are under 21 years, and for that age group I'm amazed that tactically they are below the expected standards."

Two-goal hero Morley.

Malacca, who finished 5th in the semi-pro second division, are reported to be flying in two players from Ghana for next year. At present no names have been mentioned.

SOUTH KOREA: Yukong, the 1989 professional league champions of Korea, were knocked out of the quarter finals of the Korean F.A. Cup. The Cup takes place at the end of the season and involves the six professional teams along with five business and five University sides. Yukong were defeated on penalties by Hwa Chunma Elephants.

The semi final stage in turn saw the Elephants well beaten by Daewoo Royals who, with World Cup players Kim Joo-Sung, Chung Yong-Hwwa and Byun Byu-A-Soo, were comfortable 3-0 winners. In the other semi final Hyunda Tigers beat the holders Lucky Gold Star Bulls 2-1 in extra time.

Coach Lee Joo Sung has taken a two week trip to Brazil to seek advice on his World Cup plans.

The team began training in January, preparing for a tournament in Malta in February, with the possibility of a European tour later in the year. Kim also talked about adding new faces to the team, with three or four players being drafted into the defence and midfield.

Cha Bum-Kun, still the most famous player in the country, is to return home after 10 seasons in the West German league where he played in 308 games and scored 98 goals. Cha, now 36, plans to open a soccer school for promising youngsters.

Kim Yoo-Sung can look forward to a Cup Final place with Daewoo Royals.

THAILAND: Brazilian Carlos Roberto Calvano has been given a one year contract to work with the national team. His job description is simply to 'improve standards' in the country.

Han Yang University of South Korea have won the Queen's Cup for the second year. Their opponents in the final were top local side, Royal Thai Air Force. Kim Kwang Su gave an exciting display of speed and skill to give the visitors a 1-0 half time lead. Vichitsechana equalized for Air Force against the run of play but Lee Dong Kuk headed the Koreans back in front and Choi Sung Voon sewed the game up ten minutes from the end. Lee Dong Kuk was named the man of the match.

VIETNAM: Vietnam have withdrawn from a four match international in Thailand. No official reason was given but it is thought to be because of Haipong City's poor showing in the Queen's Cup.

JAPAN: Matttsushita F.C., struggling in the bottom half of the Japanese league, look likely to release their two Thai internationals, Ronnachai Sayomchai and Natee Tongsukkaew. They will however retain Thai coach Vittaya Lavhakul.

SINGAPORE: There was considerable excitement when Finnish World Cup star Kimmo Tarkklo was rumoured to be joining Singapore champions Geylang. Instead the club settled for 23-year-old Yugoslavian Zlatko Vidan. He becomes the fourth Yugoslav in the league with Boris Lucic, former youth international goalkeeper Goran Zlopasa and Franic Ivica playing for Balestier United. Although there is not that much money to be made from playing in Singapore a good performance can lead to a place in the semi-professional Malasia league where the financial benefits are becoming increasingly attractive.

Yugoslavia is not the only hunting ground for Singapore clubs. Jurong Town caused some surprises when they signed Peter Murphy from Western Australian champions Perth Italia. The 28-year-old striker hit 24 goals in 28 games last season. He was something of a schoolboy star back in Scotland where he played semi-professional football before emigrating to Australia.

KUWAIT: After considerable debate and arguments Kuwait finally went ahead with their Islamic sport event. The soccer tournament was the highlight of a 14 day gathering which attracted 1,200 athletes from the Organization of Islamic Conference. Iraq, after their World Cup disappointment, beat Uganda in the final on a penalty shoot out. Uganda went ahead thanks to a goal from Paul Hasule, and Iraq did not equalize until Nateq Hashem found the net in the 76th minute. Kuwait took third place with a 1-0 defeat of Iran, the goal coming from Mohammed Ibrahim.

MALAYSIA: Selangor moved to the top of the Malaysian semi-professional league over the last two games to claim the title. In reflection it can be said that the decisive matches came on October 8th when Selangor, then third in the league, beat second place Kuala Lumpur 3-1 in the capital. On the same day leaders Pahang went down 1-0 to Johor.

By the end of the month Pahang were out of the running and although Selgangor still trailed cup-winners Kuala Lumpur on goal difference they had a game in hand. Their final fixture saw them go out against Sarawak needing to win to take the title. They struggled for the first half hour but when Somasundram opened the scoring it started a goal avalanche. It was 3-0 at half time, 5-0 just after the hour, while a late goal burst brought the score to eight. Much of Selgangor's success can be credited to striker Zainal Abidin. After a poor start to the season, which saw him booed by the home fans at the SEA Games, he refound his goal touch to finish top scorer of the league.

Pahang, fighting for third spot in the league, had to finish their fixtures without star striker Piyapong Pue-On. The Thai centre forward flew to Thailand to have a holiday with his family and failed to return to Malaysia on the given date. He was reported to be undertaking treatment for a back injury but his future in the semi-professional league must now be in doubt.

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Selangor	16	10	3	3	26	10	33
Kuala Lumpur	16	10	2	4	34	16	32
Kedah	16	8	4	4	22	16	28
Pahang	16	8	3	5	26	17	27
Johor	16	7	4	5	27	21	25
Sarawak	16	6	3	7	18	42	21
Singapore	16	3	4	9	22	25	13
Penang	16	3	4	9	19	30	13
Kelantan	16	2	3	11	8	26	9

The national team have announced that they will not be renewing the contract of coach Trevor Hartley. This despite the side taking the gold medal at the SEA Games.

CHINA: Much to general surprise national coach Gao Fengwen has retained his position, despite the World Cup disaster. The 1980 Olympic defeat saw the sacking of veteran coach Nian Weisi, while after the 1982 World Cup defeat to New Zealand Su Yongshun was promptly sacked. Four years later the disastrous defeat to Hong Kong cost Zeng Xueling his job.

QATAR: Relying heavily upon a sound defence, Al Sadd retained the Qatari League title when finishing two points clear of runner up Al Arabi. Permitting just five to enter its goals against column during a 12 match programme, Al Sadd was unbeaten – but conceded draws in half of those games.

Inspired by free-scoring Iranian striker Farshad Peyoos, Al Ahli had no challenger as the League's most exciting side and notched 21 goals, however gave away 19 and only finished third in the table.

Peyoos' compatriot Qassim Pour (there are seven Iranians engaged in the League, most of whom were recruited immediately after the 1984 Asian Cup finals) was ultimately a more influential figure. Although now a veteran and much slower than in earlier years, Pour possesses guile and skill in abundance and most of Al Sadd's play still revolves around him.

EUROPE COULD CATCH COLD IF DEMPSEY OCEANIA FAILS

BY PAUL MOON

DOUBTS now exist over the future of Oceania, the weakest of FIFA's regional confederations, and its demise could have unfortunate ramifications for European football.

FIFA has informed Oceania President Charlie Dempsey that standards of discipline, refereeing, organisation and overall playing ability must improve dramatically in the small Pacific nations which form the majority of the membership before 1995, when a review will be conducted, if it is to survive.

Despite this apparent stay of execution, it seems probable that the Oceania Confederation will exist in name only after FIFA meet in June this year and the vast South Pacific area it covers will, to all intents and purposes, become an area within the Asia Football Confederation.

Formed in 1966, Oceania has always been dominated by Australia – which boasts 80 per cent of the Confederation's active players – with New Zealand being its only serious challenger for regional tournament honours, while the smaller Pacific nations (Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, etc.) are woefully weak. Australia has recorded several victories by over ten goals.

In recent years, FIFA has grouped Israel and Taiwan with the Oceania countries for World Cups, World Youth Cups and Olympic Games tournaments. However, with Taiwan now back in the Asian fold and Israel likely to join UEFA in the near future, Oceania has lost its use as a political convenience.

In truth, the Confederation has far too few resources; in terms of both finance and manpower, to strengthen football to a significant degree on the tiny, scattered, sparcely populated island groups of the South Pacific.

It would cost a huge portion of FIFA's budget to raise playing standards to even those of middle-ranking Asian nations and the world body now realises that the funds already committed to Oceania could have borne much more fruit if directed elsewhere.

Australia has long considered Oceania as both anomalous and comparatively irrelevant. It has sought membership of the Asian Confederation for many years, while advocating Oceania's termination.

It now seems that Oceania's only defender is New Zealander Dempsey. He has used the Confederation as the springboard to seats of FIFA committees and turned it into something of a family concern. His daughter acts as its secretary.

Asia, however, is reluctant to take Australia and New Zealand under its wing. Both have very good records against Asian opposition and the physical superiority players from those countries generally enjoy over their Asiatic counterparts usually gives them a decisive advantage.

The danger is that, in order to persuade the Asian Confederation to accommodate Oceania, FIFA will permit it three qualifiers for further World Cup finals. And if Asia is allowed three berths at the Mundial also – although neither has justified such a representation through results along.

In such an eventuality, Europe would certainly have its number of qualifiers for the finals reduced through no fault of its own.

NEW ZEALAND: Mount Wellington gave coach John Adshead a rousing farewell when hammering Air New Zealand League champions Napier City Rovers 5-1 in the final of the Premier Series – a tournament confined to the League's top five teams, which brought the curtain down on the 1989 season.

Although depleted by injuries and suspensions, Napier remained in contention until conceding three goals in a seven minute spell just after half time. The first of these completed a hat-trick for ex Irish youth international Noel Barkley, who had earlier broken the League goalscoring record with 24 goals during the regular season.

The Premier Series format is identical to that of Austrialia's national league play offs, however the Kiwi version is a tournament in its own right and does not determine the country's champion side.

Adshead; coach of the New Zealand national team throughout its remarkable 1982 World Cup campaign, announced a couple of months earlier that he had become disillusioned with local soccer and will henceforth concentrate upon running his string of video libraries which extends across the Greater Auckland area. One of the few genuine personalities in the New Zealand game, the Fleetwood born Adshead will be sorely missed.

Canterbury experienced few problems during its first Winfield Shield defence; defeating Nelson 4-0 at Christchurch.

Exclusive

Fielding ten members of Christchurch United's Air New Zealand League side, Canterbury had far too many guns for a combination comprised exclusively of players from regional league club Nelson United.

Julyan Falloon (14th minute), Alan Carville (40th), Keith Braithwaite (45th) and Mike McGarry (59th) scored the goals for Canterbury, which by half time had ensured that the Shield would remain in its keep throughout the summer.

New Zealand will twice host the England senior international team in June, 1991. The games are to be staged as part of the local association's centenary celebrations.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Honiara Rangers, probably the most far flung of the many clubs around the world formed by Scottish emigrants and named after the Glasgow giants, has failed to retain the Foster's Super League – the premier tournament in the Solomon Islands. Rangers easily topped the League at the end of its round robin section but, in the Grand Final was defeated by runner up Sunbeam 3-1.

Rangers took the early initiative in the title decider and gained a deserved lead after 20 minutes through George Tema, only for Arnold Aluta to respond with a well taken goal three minutes later.

Injuries to two key Rangers players early in the second period proved to be the game's decisive turning point and goals by Tom Oliver and Ron Temuera enabled Sunbeam to reverse the result of the previous season's Grand Final.

FIJI: After narrowly failing to gain promotion in each of the previous eight seasons, Navua finally won a place in the Fijian first division at the end of the 1989 campaign.

It appeared that the south Viti Levu side would be frustrated yet again when Tailevu-Naitisiri, the first division's bottom team won the opening leg of the promotion – relegation play off 3-1. But, Navua bounced back to win the return a week later by the same scoreline and then prevailed in the consequential third encounter 1-0.

Oceania President Charlie Dempsey – under pressure.

USA SCENE

BY PAUL GARDNER

★★★★★

THE first get together of the US national team players since the triumph of World Cup qualifications came not on the playing field, but at New York's luxury Waldorf Hotel.

This was a meeting called by the United States Soccer Federation so that it could present each player with his new contract. Obviously, with qualification assured, the money that the USSF pays each player went up, with the top players being offered £40,000 for the coming year.

A strange, artificial occasion. One that might have been expected to produce a good deal of discussion and negotiation, but which produced nothing of the sort. The terms of the USSF's contracts were identical for all players, only the amount being offered varied. It was a take-it-or-leave-it situation, with everyone very much aware that the players really have little option but to sign.

In the event, all but two players did sign. There were rumours of a player revolt (not over the money so much as a demand for greater freedom in the right to sign personal endorsement contracts), but in the end only two players held out: goalkeeper David Vanole, and Paul Caligiuri, scorer of the famous winning goal against Trinidad.

Vanole, evidently execting to be backed up by his team-mates, found himself isolated. He left the training camp in California, and has been cut from the squad – a sad end for the man who was the team's goalkeeper during the 1988 Olympics and in the early games of the World Cup qualifying round. Paul Caligiuri held out because he objected to the clause that gives the USSF a one-year option on his contract. Despite that Caligiuri continued to attend the training camp.

Bitter end for Vanole

David Vanole is out of the USA's team after arguments over a contract.

Kasey Keller – added to US squad.

Two players who signed later than the others were goalkeeper Tony Meola and midfielder John Harkes – the delay caused by their absence on a trip to England, where they had trials with 1st division club Sheffield Wednesday. Earlier, midfielder Tab Ramos had been in England, trying out with 2nd Division Leeds United.

The team eventually put contract matters behind it and took the field in early February. The occasion was the Marlboro Cup in Miami, and the USA's opponent was its old CONCACAF rival (and fellow World Cup qualifier) Costa Rica. A disastrous game for the USA, who looked slow and disorganized, and offered little opposition to an easy 2-0 Costa Rica win.

Two days later the USA looked much sharper and earned a creditable 1-1 tie with Colombia, the US goal coming from 20-year-old newcomer Eric Wynalda. The game also marked the debut in the US goal of another 20-year-old: Kasey Keller, now No 2 to Tony Meola after the banishment of Vanole. It turned into an eventful evening for Keller. In addition to making several excellent saves, Keller was called for time-wasting (giving up an indirect free kick in the box from which Colombia levelled the score at 1-1), and then – when the game went to penalty kicks – had to take the eleventh kick, from which he hit the bar, and lost the tiebreaker for the USA.

US Coach Bob Gansler dismissed the poor form of his team as nothing to get alarmed about, pointing out that it was, in effect, pre-season for his players. Gansler himself came in for some sharp criticism from members of the European media who had travelled to Miami, only to find that it was extremely difficult to set up interviews with him. Said a Dutch journalist: "Who does he think he is? The USA are not World Champions."

After a short break, the US players gathered in Bermuda to prepare themselves for the Super Soccer Summit (the USSF's words, not mine) against the Soviet Union in Stanford, California at the end of February. A game on which the marketing people worked tirelessly, and for which over 32,000 advance tickets were sold. The match was also scheduled for live television over NBC's cable network Sports Channel.

Other opponents coming up on the USA's World Cup preparation schedule include Finland (March 10, in Tampa) and Iceland (April 8, in St. Louis). Between those games, the USA will travel to Europe to play Hungary in Budapest on March 20, and East Germany in East Berlin on March 28.

United States referee Vinnie Mauro has been named by FIFA to the roster of officials for the World Cup in Italy. Born in Italy, where he played semi-professionally, Mauro emigrated to the USA in 1964, to continue his professional work as an engineer. Now 46 years old, Mauro has been refereeing for the past 20 years, and was an official during the 1988 Olympic Games soccer tournament in South Korea.

RUMANIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

Unirea Tricolor won 19 and lost five games scoring 62 goals of which Niculescu claimed 21 to be joint 'goalgetter' with Bogdan of Rapid Bucharest. This success was the last in a championship until 1946/47 though during the war it proved possible in some seasons to complete the cup competition.

The first season after hostilities found Unirea Tricolor back in the B but promotion was gained again along with FC Ploiesti and Dermata Cluj.

Within 18 months sport was being reorganised on Soviet lines and Unirea Tricolor had disappeared. Whether Dinamo can legitimately claim to be the successor to Unirea Tricolor is a moot point whatever team manager Mircea Lucescu may now say.

His surprise can be imagined when he arrived at the Ministry of Interior club's ground to find workmen putting up new lettering: U.N.I.R.E.A. T.R.I.C.O.L.O.R.

He somewhat hastily took himself off to the club president's office to plead that such a decision be held over until the end of the season.

Worse was to follow for one of soccer's main opponents to the Ceausescu's when the Yugoslav Press Agency, Tanjug, reported that Partizan Belgrade were already in the Cup-winners' Cup semi-finals.

"I was furious," said Lucescu. "After all, we at Dinamo had been the first and almost only 'dissidents' to stand up to Valentin Ceausescu in the football world and this is what we get."

Many are his tales of the pressure under which he was put by Valentin Ceausescu, how he was sacked at Dinamo and told to devote himself to the national team, how he had to visit Ceausescu Junior at home at night and suffer because the dictator's son was jealous of his popularity.

At least he lived to tell the tale and persuade UEFA not to exclude his team from Europe.

The name change, however, is final, according to Sports Minister Mircea Anghelescu. He plans to explain the position to UEFA but the decision is clear – the club will be independently financed and no longer paid for by the Securitate. A decision on Steaua awaits a meeting with the Army Minister. This may explain why the FRF has hesitated to publish the full programme of championship matches given the still unverified status of certain leading clubs.

No donations

Apart from Steaua and Dinamo/ Unirea Tricolor, called Dinamo in the February 2 press notice, the future of FC Olt is thought to be in doubt, Victoria Bucharest may have a problem now that civil servants will no longer be obliged to make a donation to club funds and their best player Coras can return to his original club, Sportul, and Flacara Moreni, sponsored by disgraced and jailed Securitate General Tudor Postelnicu, will be without a well placed sponsor.

There is little time left before senior football is due to go in to action again and must if World Cup preparations are not to suffer.

Where are the men to sort things out? Perhaps the Rumanians should follow the Czech example and hasten to send a delegation to Frankfurt to see how a modern football association is run, (A few other countries could probably usefully do likewise?)

A start has been made by nominating former Monaco and French national manager, Stefan Kovacs, as a FRF vice-president. He was fortunate in that he seldom in the past had any problem leaving or entering Rumania but 80 per cent of his hard earned salary in the West was always withheld.

He has much to offer and his homeland can now acknowledge its debt.

After the World Cup a new RFR President must be found, possibly a former player but not Kovacs who says he is too old for such a job.

While the discussions continued the national team was in France before moving on to play in Algeria prior to the players' return to their clubs and, all being well, league action.

Where will it all end? Perhaps in an unexpectedly successful Italia 90 campaign? For the moment veteran journalist Paul Iovan's words are apt: "We are unused to thinking freely after such a long time in darkness."

RUMANIA'S SPRING SEASON

NATIONAL TEAM: March 28 away to Egypt; April 3 away to Switzerland; May 3 game to be arranged.

RUMANIAN CUP: February 21 – First Round: 7 ties in a draw which will include the last seven 'Divizia "A" teams and Politechnica Iasi, Rapid Bucharest, Unirea Alba Iulia, CSM Burzesti, Electroputere Craiova, Metalurgistul Cugir and Dermata Cluj.

February 28 – Second Round: 8 ties in a draw which will include the seven First Round winners and the top nine clubs in 'Divizia "A".'

March 11 – Quarter Finals:
April 11 – Semi Finals:
May 2 – Final.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

Spring half of season began weekend of February 24/25 (18th day of championship and runs to June 3. 'Top match' dates: Dinamo v Steaua – between March 14 or 18 Craiova v Steaua – March 21 or 18 Dinamo v Craiova – April 29.

DIARY

WORLD SOCCER'S GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE CONDUCTED BY KEIR RADNEDGE

OBITUARY

ZE BETO: The FC Porto and Portugal international goalkeeper (full name Jose Alberto Teixeira Ferreirinha) is killed in a car crash when his car skids off the main Lisbon-Oporto road, just south of Oporto. His wife and son suffer minor injuries. Ze Beto, who had been a reserve for most of the last two years with Porto, had played 23 times for Portugal at all levels from youth to Olympic, under-21 and full international level.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

ACTION: Holland beat Italy 2-1 in the Veterans' World Cup in Sao Paulo. Hovenkamp and Rep score for Holland, Antognoni for Italy.

BELGIUM: Shock news from Mechelen as the champions and European Cup quarter-finalists dismiss coach Rudi Krol after half a season. Fiez Van Hoof, aide to Krol and formerly assistant to Aad de Mos, becomes caretaker. Unease between Krol and some of the players was common knowledge.

President John Cordiez says: "We are convinced that Krol is not the right man for the job though this is not to say he is a bad coach.

Skipper Leo Clijsters says: "It is true not everyone was happy with Krol but I am surprised at the timing of his dismissal."

Krol says: "I'm surprised but not shocked. Cordiez told me he thought I was sitting on a time bomb and he thought we should have a friendly parting of the ways while we could. But a European quarter-final place and runners-up spot in the league is not bad for a new coach after four months, is it?"...in the cup Standard Liege beat Gent 4-0 to overturn a third round first leg defeat by 5-2. Standard hero is new arrival Henk Vos from Ekeren, who makes one goal (for new Dane, Mollar) and scores two himself, one from a penalty.

FRANCE: Speculation is rife that Tomislav Ivic may shortly be ousted as coach of Paris Saint-Germain...Nice announce a January 17 friendly against Steaua Bucharest.

ITALY: Diego Maradona is fined £4,200 for his criticisms of the World Cup draw procedure, by the Italian league disciplinary commission. This brings his total of Italian fines this season to £25,000...a spectator survey claims stadium violence is a major cause of falling attendances.

SPAIN: Leaders Real Madrid survive a match-long bombardment from hosts Oviedo and win 1-0 after Butragueno snaps up their only chance of the game.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: The UAE sack Brazilian Mario Zagalo as national manager, three months after he led them, against all the odds, to the World Cup finals for the first time. He is replaced by Polish coach and former international, Bernard Blaut, who is trainer to first division Sharjah. Zagalo says: "This is a surprise. I'm very upset about it. I read about this possibility in yesterday's newspapers and it was confirmed formally at my meeting with the association directors today."

Zagalo's 'sins' were taking a holiday in December despite the approach of the Gulf Cup in February, a dispute between coach and FA over qualifying bonuses, plus Zagalo's critical interviews about UAE football in the wake of securing a place in Italy.

UNITED STATES: Organising committee president Scott Letellier says that 20 cities have so far applied to host matches at the 1994 World Cup finals.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

ACTION: Lyngby of Denmark qualify for the semi-finals of the Nehru Cup in Calcutta thanks to a 3-0 win over Salgaocar. East Bengal also lose, by 1-0 to Olimpia...Brazil and Argentina draw 0-0 in Sao Paulo in the Veterans' World Cup.

BELGIUM: More bad news for Mechelen as they beat Lokeren 'only' 2-1 and miss out on a cup quarter-final place on a 3-4 aggregate.

GREECE: AEK, Olympiakos, Panathinaikos and PAOK all win to stay joint top of the league. Olympiakos beat Doxa Drama 3-1 with goals from Tsaluhidis, Tsiantakis and Detari.

HOLLAND: Ron Willems scores both goals as Ajax win 2-0 away to Twente in the cup.

ITALY: Napoli hit back from 2-0 down to force a 2-2 draw with Udinese but pursuers Inter, Sampdoria and Milan all win. Inter are now only one point behind Napoli after a 3-0 win over Bologna in which all the goals come from German stars Matthaus (two) and Klinsmann.

PORTUGAL: In the top-of-the-table tie, Porto are held 1-1 at home by second-placed Guimaraes. That draw enables Benfica, 2-0 home winners over Amadora, to move up to one point behind Porto. Both Benfica's goals from from Mats Magnusson, taking his total for the season to 21.

SPAIN: Barcelona beat Zaragoza 3-1 with goals from Koeman (penalty), Salinas and Roberto. Barsa remain second in the league but six points adrift of Real Madrid.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

ACTION: Gimnasia y Esgrima beat Mohammedan Sporting Club 2-0 in Calcutta in group B of the Nehru Cup but both go through to the semi-finals.

BELGIUM: Rumanian coach Mircea Lucescu emerges as early favourite to succeed Rudi Krol as Mechelen boss.

ENGLAND: Bobby Robson names a squad of 30 for preliminary World Cup training at the National Recreation Centre at Lilleshall.

FRANCE: Strasbourg sell former Bundesliga top scorer Thomas Allofs back to West Germany with Fortuna Dusseldorf. Strasbourg terminated Allofs's contract when they could not afford to pay the tribunal fee set by UEFA when the player moved from Koln last year...Monaco defender Luc Sonor is warned that a knee injury suffered in a friendly in Senegal could keep him out of the game for the rest of the season. Monaco are only just welcoming Glenn Hoddle and Georges Weah back to training after long-term injuries.

ITALY: Diego Maradona threatens to make a reporter eat his own newspaper after Giuseppe Pacileo of Il Mattino awards Maradona only 3.5 marks for his performance against Udinese. The two come face-to-face as Maradona prepares for his weekly television programme in a Naples studio.

SWEDEN: Halmstad forward Stefan Lindqvist signs for Swiss club Xamax Neuchatel for £320,000.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA announce that it intends to take no action against Diego Maradona for his claim that the World Cup draw was fixed. But spokesman Guido Tognoni said: "We welcome the fine imposed on Maradona by the Italian league."

Andreas Moller

WEST GERMANY: International midfielder Andreas Moller warns his club, Borussia Dortmund, that he intends to transfer abroad after the World Cup. Speculation has linked him with Juventus, Roma and Real Madrid.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

BELGIUM: Enzo Scifo is dropped from the squad flying to Greece for the next day game after demanding a guaranteed place in the Belgian World Cup line-up. After coach Walter Meeuws refuses Scifo backs down and volunteers to travel anyway. The federation, upset at the bad publicity, insists on leaving Scifo behind. Anderlecht's Luc Nilis makes the party instead...Kortrijk magistrates rule that one-time Anderlecht and Real Madrd star Juan Lozano can go ahead with a civil action against Yvan Desloover – whose leg-breaking tackle three years ago almost ended Lozano's career.

BRAZIL: The World Cup squad will prepare for Italia '90 with eight days at Gubbio, a hillside resort in Umbria, followed by the establishment of a training camp in the Italian wine capital of Asti.

RUMANIA: National coach Emerich Jenei says he expects Rumanian soccer to flourish in the freedoms of the post-Ceascescu era. As for the World Cup he says: "We are in a tough group but outsiders have often caused upsets so why shouldn't we?"

SPAIN: Real Madrid's reserve team are beaten 2-1 in a friendly by Champions' Cup quarter-finalists Dnepr. Son and Kudritsky score the Dnepr goals; Hurtado replies for Madrid.

UNITED STATES: The US get the Miami Marlboro Cup fixtures switched. Instead of opening against Uruguay, the Americans' semi-final will be against modest Costa Rica.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17

ACTION: Greece beat World Cup finalists Belgium 2-0 in Athens with second-half goals from Tsaluhidis and Apostolakis...Mexico beat Argentina 2-0 in Los Angeles with goals from Munoz and Alves...Gimania y Esgrima beat Lyngby of Denmark 2-0 in a rugged Nehru Cup semi-final in Calcutta. The game degenerates into a brawl after the Danes complain about the Gimnasia physio running on to attend an injured player while the match is still in progress...Brazil beat Poland 2-1 and Holland beat Argentina 3-1 in the Veterans' World Cup in Brazil.

AUSTRIA: Linzer ASK are negotiating the purchase of Anton Czuk, a Soviet fullback, from Dnepr.

BRAZIL: Vasco do Gama deny the sale of Bebeto's contract, as reported in the media, to an Italian corporation for £3.2million. Sampdoria are favourites.

FRANCE: Montpellier lose 2-1 at home to Steaua Bucharest in the Rumanian army team's first trip abroad since before the Christmas Revolution.

HOLLAND: In a third round cup-tie, PSV Eindhoven beat Feyenoord 2-1 with goals from Lerby and Ellerman. At least new Czechoslovak signing Stanislas Griga marks his debut with a goal.

ITALY: The FIGC announces that national manager Azeglio Vicini's contract will be extended until 1992...disciplinary committee suspensions are ordered on 15 players, including Toninho Cerezo of Brazil, Juan Barbas of Argentina and Borislav Cvetkovic of Yugoslavia...Marco Van Basten scores a brilliant hat-trick as Milan beat Atalanta 3-1...more stadia trouble as a worker suffers head injuries at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome. He falls during roofing work.

SWITZERLAND: A Swiss court in Lausanne orders a partial lifting of bank secrecy to help Dutch fraud squad investigators check details of the financial transaction when Ajax Amsterdam bought Henning Jensen from Real Madrid in 1979.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

ACTION: Olimpia of Paraguay beat Mohammedan Sporting 1-0 in a semi-final of the Nehru Cup in Calcutta. The goal, a Retamoso penalty, is greeted by the throwing of missiles, stones, even chairs at the pitch. Some 30 fans and two policemen are hurt.

AUSTRIA: The OFB sets fixture dates for World Cup warm-up matches. They include Egypt on February 28, Spain on March 28, Hungary on April 11, Argentina on May 3 and Holland on May 30.

HOLLAND: Striker Wim Kieft, surprisingly dropped by PSV shortly before the previous day's match against Feyenoord, demands a transfer. PSV coach Guus Hiddink signs a new contract extension, taking him up to 1992...police release the last of 73 hooligans held after a major outbreak of violence at Wednesday's cup quarter-final which PSV won 2-1...Holland will play warm-up games against Italy (home on February 21), the Soviet Union (in Kiev on March 28) and Austria (in Vienna on May 30).

REP.IRELAND: An application for the unborn Dublin City to be admitted to the Scottish league is rejected.

RUMANIA: The National Salvation Committee decides to ban FC Olt and Victoria Bucharest from the first division with immediate effect "because of flagrant abuses and gross violations of laws and of sporting rules."

SWITZERLAND: UEFA ban Tommy Cassidy, former Northern Ireland international, from all football for alleged corruption offences.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

BELGIUM: Beveren sack coach Rik Pauwels after four consecutive league defeats and elimination in the cup. Assistant Eddy Roelandt steps up as caretaker.

RUMANIA: Rumania pull out of a May 5 friendly against Brazil in Sao Paulo because of the uncertainty following the Christmas Revolution.

UNITED STATES: The USSF announces a list of World Cup warm-up fixtures. International committee chairman Sunil Galati added that they were maintaining efforts to gain US citizenship for the QPR forward Roy Wegerle. Galati clarified the situation regarding midfielder Paul Caligiuri and goalkeeper David Vanole. Both had rejected the national team contracts offered to the US squad members but remained eligible for selection...Warner Brothers ask Pele to single out major international stars whose reputations and ability could be used to promote soccer ahead of the 1994 World Cup. Napoli centre forward Careca, a fellow Brazilian, is reportedly top of Pele's list.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

ACTION: Olimpia of Paraguay, former world club champions, beat Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata by 1-0, with a goal from Luis Monson, to win the Nehru Cup in Calcutta...Rosario Central were held 1-1 at home by Tirol of Austria in a friendly which is part of Rosario's centenary celebrations.

SWITZERLAND: UEFA inflict a record £650,000 fine on the Spanish federation for controvening TV rules and permitting live transmission abroad of domestic league games. The French federation had complained about the Barcelona v Real Madrid match, which was screened into Europe last October. Holland had also complained. UEFA said the TV contract was clearly in contravention of their rules...UEFA also banned Strasbourg from European competition for three years for reneging on their purchase of Thomas Allofs from Köen after a UEFA tribunal had set a £1.2million fee: UEFA ordered FC Porto and Rapid Vienna to play their next home European ties 200km from home because of crowd misbehaviour.

Hugo Sanchez

SPAIN: A late goal from Hugo Sanchez saves a 1-1 draw for leaders Real Madrid away to Gijon.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

ACTION: Kuwait lose 1-0 at home to France in a friendly. Laurent Blanc scores the 73rd-minute winner...Brazil beat Italy 2-1 and Poland beat Holland 4-2 in the Veterans World Cup in Sao Paulo. Brazil now play Holland in the final with Argentina and Italy playing-off for third place.

BELGIUM: The league resumes after the winter break with Anderlecht winning 5-0 away to Waregem but Club Brugge hanging on to second place (inferior only on goal difference) after a 2-1 win over Standard Liege.

GREECE: PAOK of Salonika lead at halfway in the season after an excellent 2-1 win away to Panathinaikos in Athens. Pana snatch the lead through Georgakopulos but PAOK equalise through Egypt's Tolba Magdi and win with a 66th-minute strike from Palaskas. Pana lose all hope when Leonidas Christodolou is sent off in the 75th minute.

HOLLAND: PSV, surprised by the Kieft row in midweek, are held 1-1 away to Den Bosch, but stay top. Feyenoord, held goalless at home by Utrecht, slip to third from bottom. Ajax's game against Den Haag is postponed to a midweek date to forestall crowd trouble.

ITALY: Marco Van Basten scores twice in Milan's 2-0 win over Udinese to take his total for the season to a top-scoring 12 goals. Neighbours Inter keep up the pressure on leaders Napoli, too, thanks to a 2-0 win over Sampdoria when both goals come from West German Lothar Matthaus. Napoli beat Verona 2-0, with the second being scored just before half-time by Maradona.

PORTUGAL: Tight at the top, with two points separating Porto, Guimaraes and Benfica. Porto stay top after a Rui Aguas shot is deflected for the only goal against Beira-Mar. Benfica are held goalless at home in the Lisbon derby against Belenenses.

SPAIN: The Spanish federation says it will appeal against UEFA's record penalty for TV tranmission law-breaking. FEF president Angel Villar blames the league clubs' committee for "selling the pictures without any FEF involvement."...Barcelona narrow Real Madrid's league-leading advantage to five points after beating Valladolid 1-0 with a goal from Baquero.

MONDAY, JANUARY 22

AUSTRIA: National boss Josef Hickersberger says he has resigned himself to being without Spain-based Toni Polster for World Cup preparations until May.

BELGIUM: Mechelen's goalkeeper-captain Michel Preud'homme is voted Footballer of the Year ahead of clubmate Marc Emmers and the Anderlecht forward Marc Degryse.

DENMARK: National manager Sepp Piontek's position is in doubt as talks over the financial terms of his new contract hit a snag.

SPAIN: Tenerife, next to bottom of the first division after a 2-1 home defeat by Sevilla, dismiss coach Vicente Miera.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: The UAE announce a fixture list of friendlies to prepare for the World Cup. The schedule includes two matches each against Egypt, Denmark and the Soviet Union.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

AUSTRIA: Austria and Czechoslovakia agree to schedule regular friendly matches between first division clubs in an effort to strengthen ties between the countries.

BELGIUM: Still no new coach on the horizon for Mechelen. An inquiry is made for Dutchman Arie Haan but his current club, Stuttgart, set a £180,000 prize tag on his head...European Community commissioner Martin Bangemann reiterates Common Market policy that member countries must scrap import-limit restrictions to allow a free market in soccer transfers.

FRANCE: Georges Weah of Monaco is named African Footballer of the Year ahead of Bordeaux's Cameroon goalkeeper, Joseph-Antoine Bell, and the previous winner, Zambia'sa Kalusga Bwalya.

ITALY: Lawyers acting for Milan and for Marco Van Basten hammer out the final details of his new three-year contract which will be worth around £8million and will also give either side an option to renew the deal for one further season up until the summer of 1994. This finally appears to rule out the possibility of Van Basten rejoining Johan Cruyff at Barcelona.

RUMANIA: Sports Minister Mircea Anghelescu says that Rumanian footballers will become proper professionals when the financial restructuring of the nation's business has been completed.

SPAIN: Sports Minister Rafael Cortes Elvira says that the federation is not responsible for paying the record fine by UEFA for contravention of soccer TV broadcast regulations...Hugo Maradona, younger brother of Diego, demands a transfer from bottom-of-the-table Rayo Vallecano...Real Madrid reach the cup semi-finals. Madrid lose 1-0 to Valladolid but win the tie 3-1 on aggregate.

SWEDEN: Midfielder Stefan Rehn is sold by Everton back to Sweden with IFK Gothenburg for £275,000. Rehn moved to Goodison last summer from Djurgarden for £400,000. He says: "I realised I would never play in the first team as long as Colin Harvey was manager. I will lose money on the deal but at least now I have a chance of making our World Cup squad.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

ACTION: France beat East Germany 3-0 in a friendly in Kuwait with two goals from Eric Cantona.

ENGLAND: The Government leaks the news that the Taylor Report into Hillsborough is so scathing about identity cards that the scheme will be dropped.

FRANCE: Monaco's long-term casualty, Glenn Hoddle, suffers another setback. His knee troubles him in training and the club specialist offers little hope that he will be fit for the Cup-winners' Cup quarter-final against Valladolid.

HOLLAND: Vitesse Arnhem sign Soviet pair Valeri Masalitin and midfielder Sergei Krutov. The deal is arranged because Vitesse have a twinning arrangement with TSKA Moscow. Masalitin was 32-goal top scorer last season in the Soviet season.

DIARY

CONTINUED

ITALY: Milan will face Napoli in the cup semi-finals even though Napoli are held 1-1 at home by Fiorentina in the last round of the quarter-final round-robin matches. Maradona scores for Napoli.

SWEDEN: Malmo, after their first full year as a professional outfit, show a profit of £850,000, thanks to increased revenue from advertising and television.

WEST GERMANY: Hamburg buy Brazilian striker Nando from Flamengo of Rio for £290,000.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

WEST GERMANY: Franz Beckenbauer and Sepp Maier agree to make a playing comeback in a match on March 26 in Dresden when a joint German XI faces a World XI led by Pele in a fund-raising game aimed to raise cash for the reconstruction of the historic Dresden castle

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

FINLAND: Finland agree that their international against the Irish Republic in Dublin on May 16 can be a testimonial for veteran Irish midfield star, Liam Brady.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

BELGIUM: Anderlecht suffer their second home defeat of the season, by 1-0 to Antwerp. The visitors' heroes are veteran Slav keeper Ratko Svilar and penalty-converting match-winner Hans Peter Lehnhoff.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

ACTION: Marseille beat Rumania 2-1 in a friendly in Marseille – the first time Rumania have played as a national team since before the Christmas Revolution. Vercruysse and Mozer score for Marseille.

BELGIUM: Club Brugge win 3-0 away to Kortrijk to overtake Anderlecht and go top of the table. Staelens (formerly of Kortrijk), Franky Van der Elst and an own goal by Kortrijk keeper Eykelboom provide the Brugge goals.

GREECE: AEK beat PAOK 2-1 and Olympiakos beat Panseraikos 2-1 to establish themselves as joint league leaders.

HOLLAND: PSV beat Willem II 2-1. The decisive goal is headed by Wim Kieft, who has now dropped his transfer request. However Danish veteran defender Ivan Nielsen, omitted for this game, is the latest PSV star to ask for a move.

ITALY: Hooligan trouble at the Fiorentina v Napoli game with 25 fans and one policeman hurt in street clashes. Yet the crowd is down by up to 10,000 as other Fiorentina fans stage a 'strike' in protest at club plans to sell Roberto Baggio. Napoli win the match 1-0 with a Maradona goal. Milan beat Genoa 1-0 to keep up the pressure at the top but champions Inter lose 1-0 to Juventus.

SPAIN: Real Madrid thrash Castellon 7-0 with a hat-trick from Hugo Sanchez and two goals from Rafael Martin Vazquez. Madrid coach John Toshack says this was the best display he has seen from Bernd Schuster. Castellon coach Luis Garcia says: "Madrid were just walking. Imagine what would have happened to us if they had started running!"

MONDAY, JANUARY 29

BELGIUM: Mechelen ask permission to stage their Champions' Cup quarter-final against holders Milan at the Heysel stadium. The Interior Ministry and the city corporation assure UEFA that they can guarantee safety and security at the stadium which has not seen a European club match since the tragedy of 1985.

ENGLAND: The Taylor Report is formally published with a string of swingeing criticisms of the way soccer is run domestically plus imperative recommendations that all stadia should become all-seater by the end of the decade.

SOUTH KOREA: The national squad meets together before leaving for a three-week training trip to Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

YUGOSLAVIA: Partizan say that, since they are banned from their own stadium because of previous crowd trouble, they are likely to play the 'home' leg of their Cup-winners' quarter-final against Dinamo Bucharest in Stuttgart or Salonika because "we are assured a big crowd because of the Yugoslavs emigrant workers in these cities."

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

ACTION: Bordeaux beat Yugoslavia 2-1 in a friendly. Klaus Allofs and Piet Den Boer score for the French league leaders, Faruk Hadzibegic for Yugoslavia.

BRAZIL: Mirandinha agrees terms to complete his return to Palmeiras from Newcastle – who are expecting him back in England tomorrow to discuss resuming his career with them.

RUMANIA: The national team arrange to play Bayern in Munich the following week to raise cash for Rumanians left homeless and destitute by the revolution...the Sports Ministry announces that Gheorghe Hagi and Marius Lacatus, and possibly some other players, will be sold abroad after the World Cup, with the cash used to renovate sports facilities in Rumania.

SWEDEN: Jan Jansson is virtually ruled out of the World Cup after a freak accident at home when he rips knee ligaments as he kneels to take his dinner out of the oven!

UNITED STATES: A four-man team, charged with checking possible 1994 World Cup venues and raising cash support, begins a 22-city tour of the US by inspecting the Orange Bowl and Joe Robbie stadia in Miami.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

ACTION: The United Arab Emirates beat Egypt 1-0 in a friendly in Dubai. The only goal is scored by UAE skipper Fawad Khamis.

Romario

HOLLAND: PSV decide to sell Kieft and Nielsen at the season's end but offer a new contract to Brazilian marksman Romario...Groningen dismiss coach Hans Westerhof...Fortuna draw 1-1 with Feyenoord.

ITALY: Marc Martens, specialist treating Ruud Gullit, says he should know by the end of February whether there is any chance of Gullit playing for Holland at the World Cup finals...in the cup semi-finals first legs, Milan are held goalless at home by Napoli but two home goals from Casiraghi bring Juventus a 2-0 success over Roma.

SPAIN: Steve Archibald, once with Barcelona, returns to Spain from Hibernian to join second division Espanol...in a full league round Real Madrid hold on at the top despite being pressed by Atletico, who win 2-0 against Malaga.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA names the 36 World Cup referees – including two from hosts Italy and two from neutral France.

UNITED STATES: The USSF tries to enlist Henry Kissinger's support for special legislation designed to rush through Roy Wegerle's citizenship papers so the QPR forward can play for the US in the World Cup.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

ACTION: Iraq beat Denmark 1-0 in Baghdad...Pisa beat Rumania 3-0 in Italy.

BELGIUM: European Community officials, while welcoming UEFA members' move to allow four foreigners per team from January, 1993, say this is still enough progress and not fast enough, either.

SPAIN: After the £700,000 fine levied by UEFA for unauthorised broadcasting abroad of live matches, the Spanish federation bans state coverage of games until the issue can be resolved.

SWEDEN: UEFA choose the qualifying round seeds for the 1990-92 European championship. They are Holland, England, Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, West Germany and Rumania.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

ACTION: In the Marlboro Cup semi-finals, in Miami, Costa Rica surprisingly beat their United States hosts 2-0 and will meet Uruguay (2-0 winners over Colombia) in the final.

AUSTRIA: National boss Josef Hickersberger says he will quit after the World Cup.

DENMARK: Sepp Piontek quits as national boss after newspaper speculation about his pay and tax situations.

ITALY: West German spearhead Rudi Iler signs a contract extension linking him to Roma until 1992.

SWEDEN: The draw for the 1992 European championship is kind to England, slipped into the only four-team group (all the others involve five teams) and matched against familiar opponents the Irish Republic, Poland and Turkey. new entrants in the tournament are the minnows of the Faroe Islands (who will have to play in Sweden or Denmark) because they have only plastic pitches. The draw for the under-21s follows the same split as the senior event. The semi-finalists will qualify for the Barcelona Olympics.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

SPAIN: Atletico Madrid waste a chance to narrow the gap at the top when they lost 2-1 away to Sevilla.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

ACTION: Uruguay win the Marlboro Cup in Miami, beating Costa Rica 2-0 in the final. Colombia beat the United States 9-8 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the third-place game...in the Rothmans tournament in Malta, Norway beat South Korea 3-2 thanks to two goals in the last three minutes.

ENGLAND: Gary Lineker scores a hat-trick as Tottenham beat Norwich 4-0.

FRANCE: Bordeaux and Marseille are both held 1-1 (by Saint-Etienne and Montpellier respectively) as the league resumes after a seven-week break.

GREECE: Olympiakos beat Ionikos 3-0 and continue to share the league leadership with AEK. In Olympiakos' victory, Panayiotis Tsaluhidis becomes the only Greek player to score in five consecutive league games.

HOLLAND: Ajax put on one of their best displays of the season to defeat Twente 4-0. Stefan Pettersson scores twice.

ITALY: Two goals from Van Basten lift Milan to a 3-2 victory over Fiorentina; Maradona scores twice to lift Napoli to a 3-0 win away to Cremonese.

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

Sunday, January 14

Jan 14 = Guatemala City - intl friendly
Guatemala 0
Argentina 0
Att: 12,000. **Ref:** Escobar (Gua)

Guatemala: Piccinini - Hernandez, Vargas, Gonzalez, Rodriguez, Melendez (Sanchez), Moreno, Mattos, Archila (Funes), Ferreira, Donis (Vargas II).

Argentina: Falcioni - Simon, Monzon, Fabbri, Olarticoechea, Basualdo (Airez), Giusti, Batista, Nestor Gorosito, Valdano, Alfaro Moreno.

Argentina, fielding a virtual B team without their Europe-basefd stars, pressed hard for most of the first half without creating any clear chances. Guatemala, their team a mixture of players from the top clubs Municipal and Comunicaciones, forced their way back into the in the second half. But both teams were whistled off at the end.

Weds, January 17

Jan 17 = Athens - intl friendly
Greece 2 (Yotis Tsaluhidis 58, Stratos Apostolakis 89)
Belgium 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,000.

Greece: Sarganis - Apostolakis, Ieontiadis (Kutulas 46), Manolas, Kalitzakis, Tsaluhidis, Saravakos, Stamatis (Tsifoutis 76), Borbokis (Karataidis 80), Marangos (Zakkas 76), Tsiantakis.

Belgium: Preud'homme - Grun, Clijsters, Dewolf, Emmers, F Van der Elst, Vervoort (Nilis 65), Versavel, Degryse (Sanders 54), Ceulemans, Van der Linden (Claesen 70).

Belgium got off to a bad start in their World Cup warm-up work with a much-publicised row involving Enzo Scifo, who demanded the guarantee of a first-team place. When this was refused he grudgingly agreed to be a squad member. But the federation had had enough and Scifo was left at home with Luc Nilis replacing him in the squad. Van der Linden missed the Germans' best chance in the first half. In the second, however, Belgium lost their grip. Tsaluhidis gave Greece the lead with a left-foot shot after a corner by skipper Dimitris Saravakos. Just before the end Stratos Apostolakis outpaced and out-thought three defenders to score Greece's second goal.

Jan 17 = Los Angeles - intl friendly
Mexico 2 (Carlos Munoz 33, Luis Roberto Alves 59)
Argentina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,675.

Mexico: Larios - Hernandez, Tena, Roberto Ruiz Esparza, Hector Esparza, Bernal, Munoz, Farfan (Guzman 69), Alves (Mora 63), De la Torre (Sosa 67), Pelaez.

Argentina: Goycoechea - Monzon (Simeone 81), Fabbri, Giusti, Batista, Olarticoechea, Basualdo, Bausa, Goroito, Aires, Alfaro Morena.

Argentina lost their second game in a week, after a 2-0 defeat by Monaco seven days' earlier. Mexico went ahead when Carlos Munoz headed in a corner from Jose Manuel De la Torre. The second goal was also created by De la Torre, the move involving Ricardo Pelaez before Alves secured a decisive goal with a pass into the stride of Luis Roberto Alves.

Sunday, January 21

Jan 21 = Kuwait - intl friendly
Kuwait 0
France 1 (Laurent Blanc 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000

Kuwait: Samir Said - Hussain, Al Flij, Mrifa, Abdennabi, Suleiman, Briki, Batty, Nasser, Anbar Said, Ahmad Al Saba.

France: Rousset - Amoros, Silvestre, B Boli, Sauzee, Pardo (Deschamps 45), Dib, Blanc, Garde, Cantona (Papin4 46), Vahirua (Ferreri 46).

French boss Michel Platini provided new caps for Rousset, Garde and Vahirua in this first international of a three-match trip. France dominated play but it was not until 17 minutes from the end that Laurent Blanc headed home a cross from substitute Jean-Marc Ferreri for the only goal.

Weds, January 24

Jan 24 = Kuwait - intl friendly
France 3 (Eric Cantona 2, 24, Didier Deschamps 75)
East Germany 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Moussa (Kwt)

France: Martini - Amoros (Boli 81), Di Meco, Casoni, Sauzee (Silvestre 78), Blanc (Dib), Pardo, Deschamps, Ferreri (Garde 60), Cantona, Vahirua.

E Germany: Heyne - Herzog, Wagenhaus, Reich, Maucksch (Weidemann 72), Stubner, Sammer (Weiland 82), Steinmann, Wosz (Wuckle 46), Kirsten, Doll.

Two brilliance first-half goals from the tempestuous Eric Cantona set France on the way to victory in this neutral-based exhibition friendly. Cantona's opening goal was a gem, following two bouts of inter-passing, with Deschamps and the the South Seas islander, Vahirua. The new winger went around keeper Heyne before leaving Cantona a simple tap-in. Cantona scored his second after a Pardo free kick and twice hit a post in the second half. Deschamps wrapped up the scoring with a long-range shot which took a deflection.

Monday, January 29

Jan 29 = Baghdad - intl friendly
Iraq 1
Denmark 1
Att: 6,500.

Weds, January 31

Jan 31 = Dubai - intl friendly
United Arab Emirates 1 (Fawad Khamis)
Egypt 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000.

In a World Cup warm-up the Emirates surprisingly beat the North Africans goal from skipper Khamis.

Thursday, February 1

Feb 1 = Baghdad - intl friendly
Iraq 1 (Ahmed Radhi 31)
Denmark 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000

The Danish team was a mixture of under-21 and potential Olympic international players. None of the famous exiles were available.

Friday, February 2

Feb 2 = Miami - Marlboro Cup semi-final
United States 0
Costa Rica 2 (Juan Cayasso 8, Enrique Diaz 61)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,392.

United States: Meola - Krumpe, Windischmann, Trittschuh, Bliss (Banks 46) - Ramos (Klopas 53), Caligiuri, Harkes, Murray - Goulet (Wynalda), Perez.

Costa Rica: Hidalgo - Montero, Diaz, Obando, Garro, Camacho, Cayasso (Ramirez 80), Chavarria, Chang (Marchena 46), Coronado, Medford.

Some surreptitious reorganising of the semi-final draw had taken place a week or so earlier, matching the Americans with what should have been the easiest opposition. Instead Costa Rica proved a real handful. Their players displayed speed, good technique and direction. The Americans never recovered from going a goal down in only eight minutes when Cayasso headed home from a Medford corner on the right. Just after the hour Diaz chased a long through ball from Garro, outpaced Krumpe and shot home No 2.

Feb 2 = Miami - Marlboro Cup semi-final
Colombia 0
Uruguay 2 (Pedro Pedrucci 78, William Castro 82)
HT: 0-0. Att: 25,392. Ref: Mauro (US)

Colombia: Higuita - Herrera, Perea, Mendoza, Gomez - Perez, Restrepo (Garcia 46), Redin, Rincon (Uzurriaga 62) - Iguaran, Fajardo.

Uruguay: Alvez - Goncalves, De Leon, Pintos Saldanha, Dominguez - Ostolaza, Correa, Suarez (Pedrucci 46) - Martinez (Miqueiro 76), Fonseca (Cedres), Castro.

Uruguay qualified for the Marlboro Cup final thanks to two goals in the 18 minutes. Colombian held out bravely considering Ricardo Perez was sent off for felling Daniel Fonseca after only 32 minutes. They were without European-based stars such as Sosa and Francescoli but still displayed some traditional directness. A mistake by Colombian goalkeeper Higuita, as he ran beyond both his penalty area and the ball following a Castro free kick, allowed Pedrucci to score a first goal. Castro scored the second himself after collecting a pass from Miqueiro and embarking on a solo run which ended with a decisive strike for goal. The closest Colombia came was in the 20th minute when Uruguay keeper Alvez saved at point-blank range from Iguaran.

Sunday, February 4

Feb 4 = Miami - Marlboro Cup Final
Uruguay 2 (William Castro 5pen, Sergio Martinez 11)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,231. **Ref:** Mauro (US)

Uruguay: Alvez - Goncalves, De Leon, Saldanha, Pereyra, Dominguez, Martinez (Miqueiro 74), Ostolaza, Fonseca (Cedres 46), Castro, Pedrucci

Costa Rica: Hidalgo - Garro (Quesada 46), Montero, Camacho (R Flores 22), Marchena, Obando (Ramirez 75), Chavarria, Cayasso, Diaz, Medford, Coronado (L Flores 58).

Uruguay collected the trophy with typical economy of effort. The South Americans scored twice in the first 11 minutes and then settled back to deny Costa Rica anything and everything. Sergio Martinez said: We didn't expect to get anything out of the game because we had had virtually no training. But it is a wonderful feeling. Uruguay went ahead with a Castro penalty after Montero brought down Pedrucci. Then Martinez increased the cup-winning lead with a shot which deflected beyond keeper Keller.

Feb 4 = Miami - Marlboro Cup third place play-off
United States 1 (Eric Wynalda 4)
Colombia 1 (Fajardo 25)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,231.
Colombia 9-8 on penalties

United States: Keller - Windischmann, Balboa, Doyle, Armstrong (Banks 46) - Perez (Murray 44), Ramos, Harkes, Stollmeyer (Caliguiri 82) - Wynalda, Goulet (Eichmann 65).

Colombia: Higuita - Herrera, Perea, Mendoza, Gildardo Gomez - Coll, A Garcia (Restrepo 76), Redin, Fajardo (Usuriaga 70) - Iguaran, Rincon (Guerreiro 46).

This match resolved itself in a goalkeepers' duel. When it all came down to penalties, and everyone had taken their kick, it was left to youthful American keeper Kasey Keller to face Higuita. Keller hit his penalty hard and straight - but against the woodwork and Colombia were the winners. Earlier the Americans had taken a fourth-minute lead with a first international goal by Eric Wynalda. This advantage was wiped out after 25minutes. Keller took more than four steps in possession after foiling a raid by Iguaran. Herrera touched his free kick square and Fajardo shot home.

Feb 4 = Valletta - Malta tournament
Norway 3 (Berge Orjan 55, Bent Skammelsrud 87, Rune Tangen 89)
South Korea 2 (Hwan Seon-hong 38, Lee Sang-yoon 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,000.

World Cup finalists South Korea looked badly off form, even though they took an interval lead after Hwan beat two defenders and shot home. Orjan equalised ten minutes after the break but Lee soon reclaimed the advantage for Norway. The Koreans appeared poised for victory until the last three minutes when Skammelsrud and Tangen turned the match around. Tangen's winner was a disaster for Korean keeper Kim Pong-joo. He fumbled a shot and Tangen was in position to stab the loose ball home.

Feb 4 = Algiers - intl friendly
Algeria 0
Rumania 0
Att: 12,000.

Algeria: Osmani - Benhalima, Adjas (Bounaas 46), Megharia, Adghigh (Serrar 46) - Sherif El-Ouzzani, Djahnit, Meftah, Saib - Bouiche (Rahmouni 67), Rahem.

Rumania: Lung - Petrescu, Andone, Iovan, Rotariu - Popescu, Lacatus, Sabau, *Hagi - Balint (Chergi 75), Lupu (Stoica 75).
*Hagi sent off, 50.

Rumania appeared with much the same team as usual for this friendly - not calling up, at this early stage, their prodigal sweeper, Belodedici, though he was expected to be among the World Cup squad. Rumania had to play almost half the game without Gheorghe Hagi, sent off in an international for the second time in four months.

Weds, February 7

Feb 7 = Valletta - Malta tournament
Malta 1 (Raymond Vella 38)
Norway 1 (Fjortoft 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000.

Norway took the overall lead in the tournament thanks to this draw. They also took the lead through Jan Fjortoft, only to see Raymond Vella equalise after exchanging passes with Charles Scherri and Hubert Suda.

Thursday, February 8

Feb 8 = Dubai - intl friendlies
United Arab Emirates 0
Denmark 5 (Jakobsen 2, Larsen 16, Svingaard 36, Risom 42, Hogh 77)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 3,000.

UAE: Adel Annas - Khalil Ghanem, Salim Rabi, Hassan Suhail, Abdullah Sultan, Andulrahman Mohammed, Abdulaziz Mohammed, Saif Sultan, Hussain Ghloom, Hassan Mofid, Abdulrahman Haddad.

Denmark: Schmeichel - Risom, J Hansen, L Olsen, J Larsen, H Larsen, Helt, Jakobsen (Jes Hogh), Steen Nielen, Svinggaard, B Rasmussen.

The UAE rested half their first team and paid the penalty with this heavy defeat. Denmark coasted through the second half but would have won by an even clearer margin had it not been for some fine saves by keeper Adel Annas.

Saturday, February 10

Feb 10 = Valletta - Malta Rothmans tournament
Malta 1 (Kristian Laferla 83)
South Korea 2 (Baik Jong-chul 39, Kwan Hwangbo 75)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000.

Malta: Cluett - Edwin Camilleri, Galea, Laferla, Gregory, Scerri (Zammit 46), Falzone (Zarb 46), Raymond Vella, Carabott (Zerafa 63), Degiorgio, Suda.

S Korea: Kim Poong-joo - Gu Sang-bum, Lee Young-sang, Chung Jong-soo. Hong Myung-bo, Lee Young-ik, Lee Young-jin (Kwan Hwang-bo 73), Byun Byung-joo, lee Sang-yoon, Noh Soo-ho, Baik Jong-chul.

Though the South Korean World Cup finalists beat their hosts in the last match of the round-robin, it was Norway who won the tournament. Baik headed them into the lead shortly before half-time from a cross by Young-sang. Substitute Kwan scored two minutes after appearing as a substitute in the second half. Malta pulled back a consolation goal through Kristrian Laferla. Norway finished with three points, South Korea with two and Malta with one.

Monday, February 12

Feb 12 = Dubai - intl friendly
United Arab Emirates 1 (Abdul Azia Mohammed 80)
Finland 1 (Tiainen 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,000.

A late goal from Abdul Azia saved the UAE in a match which was prepartion both for the World Cup but also for the much more imminent Gulf Cup.

Feb 12 = Bahrain - intl friendly
Bahrain 1 (Khamis Eid 83)
Denmark 2 (Lars Jakobsen 29, 30)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,000

A home-based Danish side was too sharp in the first half for their hosts, who were warming up for the Gulf Cup. Lars Jakobsen won the match with two goals in a minute midway through the first half.

Tuesday, February 13

Feb 13 = Hamilton - intl friendly
Bermuda 0
United States 1 (Chris Sullivan 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000

Bermuda: Williams (Adams 85) - Bell, Bruce, Brown, Douglas, Anderson, Thompson (Ming 65), Musson (Jennings 73), R Hill (Webb 57), C Hill, Lightbourne.

US: Meola (Keller 46) - Balbo (Banks 46), Windischmann, Krumpe, Doyle. Stollmeyer, Ramos, Harkes, Murray, Sullivan, Wynalda.

A spectacular overhead kick by Chris Sullivan brought the Americans their first victory in three games. Bermuda keeper Ty Williams had made some fine saves in the first half and was helped by some poor American finishing. Wynalda and Murray in particular were badly off target. Bermuda wasted their best chance when Rick Hill shot a penalty wide in the 43rd minute after his younger brother Corey was fouled by Windischmann.

Weds, February 14

Feb 14 = Cairo - intl friendly
Egypt 0
Denmark 0
Att: 30,000.

Egypt launched their World Cup warm-up programme - as well as their African Nations' Cup preparations - with this draw against a depleted Danish team. Egypt created their best chances in the first half and Peter Schmeichel made excellent saves from Ahmed Ramzi and Ayman Shawki. Egypt's star striker, Hossan Hassan, was also guilty of a bad miss in front of an open goal. Egypt missed the absent Gamal Abdel Hamid and Taher Abu Zeid (both injured). Irish Republic manager Jack Charlton was in the crowd.

Feb 14 = Dubai - intl friendly
United Arab Emirates 2 (Adnan Talyani 65, Zuhair Bhakee 73)
Sweden 1 (Stefan Schwarz 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000.

The UAE recovered their poise after the previous week's thrashing by Denmark. They were lucky to survive at one stage in the first half when defender Mir headed out from under his own crossbar with goalkeeper Mohsin Musabah stranded. Talyani and Bhakee then scored in the second half, Bhakee converting a cross from Mir.

Other Matches

Jan 9: Costa Rica 1, FC Tirol 1.
Jan 23: Boca Juniors 1, FC Tirol 0.
Jan 29: Marseille 2 (Vercruysse, Mozer), **Rumania 1** (Iovan).
Jan 30: Bordeaux 2 (K Allofs, Den Boer), **Yugoslavia 1** (Hadzibegic).
Feb 1: Pisa 3, Rumania 0.
Feb 6 (Zico Farewell in Rio): **Flamengo 2** (Fernando 53, 80), **World XI 2** (Claudio Adao, Tarantini).
Feb 7: Bayern Munich 2 (Wohlfarth 18, 84), Rumania 1 (Hagi 34).- **Torino 1** (Roberto Policano 26), **Soviet Union 2** (Mikhailichenko 5, Litovchenko 18). - Cameroon 1 (Abena 65), Kuban (Sov) 0. - (Reggio Emilia): Italy U21 1 (Bresciani 84pen), Greece U21 1).
Feb 8: Qatar 0, Rapid Vienna 0.
Feb 14: Thailand 2, Rotor (Sov Union) 1 (King's Cup Final in Bangkok).

Central American Games

Tegucigalpa, Honduras (under-23 event): Honduras 4, Nicaragua 0; C Rica 3, Nicaragua 0; Honduras 1, Nicaragua 0; C Rica 1, Honduras 0. Final standings: 1, Honduras (on goal diff); 2, Costa Rica; 3, Nicaragua.

"VETERANS WORLD CUP"
(In Sao Paulo, Brazil)
First round: **Brazil 4, Holland 1; Argentina 5, Poland 2; Holland 2, Italy 1; Brazil 0, Argentina 0; Italy 1, Poland 1; Brazil 2, Italy 1; Poland 4, Holland 2; Holland 3, Argentina 1; Brazil 2, Poland 1.** Third Place Play-off: **Argentina 3, Italy 2.** Final: **Brazil 5, Holland 0.**

Uruguayan captain Hugo De Leon lifts the Marlboro Cup after their win over Colombia.

EUROPEAN LEAGUE RESULTS

Week ending January 21

Winter break in France and West Germany.

BELGIUM

Gent 0, Mechelen 0. Att: 12,000.
Antwerp 5 (Lehnhoff 16, 48, 73, Stojadinovic 46, Broechaert 86), Lokeren 0. Att: 6,000.
Lierse 3 (Van Regenmortel 15, Viscaal 28, 81), Beerschot 2 (Brylle 7, Pinter 86). Att: 5,500.
Waregem 0, Anderlecht 5 (Degryse 24, 60, Oliveira 25, Van der Linden 28, 49). Att: 8,500.
Liege 0, Cercle 0. Att: 6,750.
Bevern 0, SWt Truiden 0. Att: 4,500.
Brugge 2 (Farina 12, Booy 89), Standard 1 (Staelens og 90). Att: 17,000.
Ekeren 2 (Snelders 21, Schmoller 77), Kortrijk 0. Att: 4,000.
Racing Mechelen 1 (De Coninck 82), Charleroi 1 (Camataru 70). Att: 2,500.

GREECE

Ionikos 0, Iraklis 0.
Kalamaria 0, AEK 0.
Doxa 0, Panionios 0.
Ethnikos 1, Xanthi 0.
Larissa 2, Volos 0.
Levadiakos 1, Apollon 0.
OFI 1 (Andrianidis 59), Olympiakos 1 (Tsaluhidis 65).
Panserraikos 0, Aris 0.
PAOK 2 (Magdi 22, Palaskas 66), Panathinaikos 1 (Georgakopulos 14).

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Cup third round: PSV 2 (Lerby 15, Ellerman 81), Feyenoord 1 (Griga 31).
Weekend:
Fortuna Sittard 0, Vitesse Arnhem 0. Att: 3,000.
Willem II 1 (Loggie 1), MVV Maastricht 1 (Van Henegouwen 8). Att: 5,500.
Haarlem 2 (Holverda 20, Koffijberg 64), Volendam 1 (Vermes 26). Att: 3,000.
NEC Nijmegen 1 (Janssen 30), Sparta Rotterdam 2 (Vurens 25, Prince Polley 55). Att: 3,000.
Den Bosch 1 (Van der Linden 24), PSV Eindhoven 1 (Koot 72). Att: 8,000.
Groningen 1 (Weering 66), RKC 2 (Hoekstra 57, 85). Att: 17,000.
Feyenoord 0, Utrecht 0. Att: 13,020.
Roda 2 (Van Loen 41, Broeders 72), Twente 0. Att: 6,500.

ITALY

Midweek:
Bologna 0, Udinese 0. Att: 18,000.
Cremonese 2 (Dezotti 54, Limpar 73), Lazio 1 (Bergodi 81). Att: 8,300.
Fiorentina 2 (Baggio 63pen, Battistini 73), Juventus 2 (Napoli 2, Zavarov 15). Att: 23,400.
Lecce 0, Inter 0. Att: 34,000.
Milan 3 (Van Basten 15, 60, 62), Atalanta 1 (Caniggia 12). Att: 60,000.
Napoli 1 (Crippa 26), Cesena 0. Att: 50,600.
Roma 0, Genoa 1 (Aguilera 15). Att: 26,350.
Sampdoria 2 (Lombardo 53, 70), Ascoli 0. Att: 18,000.
Verona 1 (Gutierrez 70), Bari 1 (Magrin og 11). Att: 11,000.
Weekend:
Ascoli 1 (Casagrande 49), Juventus 2 (Brio 13, De Agostini 17 pen). Att: 20,000.
Atalanta 3 (Bonacina 22, Bortolazzi 79, Caniggia 89), Roma 0. Att: 15,000.
Bari 0, Bologna 0. Att: 25,000.
Cesena 4 (Djukic 7, Agostini 31, 37pen, Nobile 85), Lecce 0. Att: 12,000.
Genoa 1 (Signorini 9), Cremonese 0. Att: 26,000.
Inter 2 (Matthaus 31, 41), Sampdoria 0. Att: 55,000.
Lazio 1 (Sosa 34), Fiorentina 1 (Kubik 70). Att: 18,000.
Napoli 2 (Giacomarro og 16, Maradona 41), Verona 0. Att: 55,000.
Udinese 0, Milan 2 (Van Basten 12, 80). Att: 40,000.

PORTUGAL

Nacional 1, Penafiel 1.
Setubal 1 (Makukula 67), Sporting 1 (Silas 44).
Beira Mar 0, Porto 1 (Aguas 15).
Belenenses 0, Benfica 0.
Guimaraes 0, Portimonense 0.
Tirsense 0, Chaves 1.
Uniao 0, Braga 0.

SPAIN

Gijon 1 (Abelardo 35), Real Madrid 1 (Hugo Sanchez 85). Att: 25,000.
Barcelona 1 (Baquero 62), Valladolid 0. Att: 60,000.
At Madrid 1 (Marina 64), Valencia 1 (Eloy 73). Att: 56,000.
Mallorca 2 (Nadal 71, 81), Osasuna 2 (Ciganda 50, Sola 67). Att: 23,000.
Real Sociedad 0, Bilbao 0. Att: 20,000.
Castellon 1 (Sanudo og 26), Oviedo 1 (Gracan 86). Att: 13,000.
Rayo 2 (Juanito 22pen, Soto 85), Zaragoza 2 (Higuera 13, Pardeza 52pen). Att: 7,500.
Logrones 1 (Oliva 30), Cadiz 1 (Quevedo 70). Att: 11,000.
Celta 1 (Mosquera 41), Malaga 1 (Toledano 34). Att: 16,000.
Tenerife 1 (Estevaran 71pen), Sevilla 2 (Salguero 17, Polster 85). Att: 22,000.

Week ending January 28

France and West Germany on winter break.

BELGIUM

Charleroi 2 (Camataru 54, Beugnies 65), Gent 1 (Levin 30). Att: 12,000.
Mechelen 3 (Bosman 36, Emmers 48, Rutjes 83), Germinal Ekeren 0. Att: 8,000.
Beerschot 4 (Mannaerts og 8, Pinter 37, Claessens 66, Tahamata 67), Beveren 1 (Kusto 75 pen). Att: 3,500.
St Truiden 1 (Van Kets 9), FC Liege 1 (Nijskens 69). Att: 9,000.
Anderlecht 0, Antwerp 1 (Lehnhoff 55). Att: 30,000.
Lokeren 0, Racing Mechelen 0. Att: 2,500.
Kotrijk 0, Club Brugge 3 (Staelens 7, Leo Van der Elst 68, Borkelmans 69). Att: 14,000.
Cercle 3 (De Buser 45, 53, 62), Waregem 1 (Teppers 68). Att: 3,000.
Standard 2 (Molnar 23, Vandersmissen 84), Lierse 0. Att: 12,000.

GREECE

Doxa 2, Levadiakos 0.
Apollon 1, Kalamraria 1.
Panionios 1, OFI 0.
AEK 2, PAOK 1.
Olympiakos 2, Panserraikos 1.
Panathinaikos 4, Ethnikos 1.
Aris 1, Ionikos 1.
Xanthi 0, Larissa 0.
Iraklis 2, Volos 0.

HOLLAND

PSV Eindhoven 2 (Gerets 16, Kieft 45min 44sec), Willem II 1 (Mallien 29). Att: 24,600.
MVV Maastricht 1 (Vincent 57), Roda JC 1 (Van der Waart 33). Att: 9,500.
Twente 2 (Schmidt 20, Steffensen 68pen), NEC Nijmegen 1 (Janssen 15). Att: 3,500.
RKC 1 (De Wijs 26), Den Bosch 1 (Barendse 69). Att: 4,200.
Utrecht 0, Haarlem 0. Att: 4,500.
Vitesse 1 (Van Arum 35), Den Haag 1 (Van der Laan 34). Att: 8,000.
Postponed: Sparta v Ajax, Volendam v Groningen, Fortuna v Feyenoord.

ITALY

Midweek:
Cup qtr-fnl grps, final rnd res: Inter 3, Roma 1; Fiorentina 1, Napoli 1; Atalanta 1, Milan 1; Juventus 2, Sampdoria 1 (Semi-finals: Roma v Juventus, Milan v Napoli).
Weekend:
Bologna 1 (De Marchi 28), Cesena 0. Att: 22,123.
Cremonese 1 (Maspero 79), Atalanta 1 (Bordin 35). Att: 9,699.
Fiorentina 0, Napoli 1 (Fusi 19). Att: 23,781.
Juventus 1 (Napoli 26), Inter 0. Att: 47,103.
Lecce 0, Lazio 0. Att: 14,274.
Milan 1 (Massaro 35), Genoa 0. Att: 59,015.
Roma 1 (Gerolin 76), Bari 0. Att: 22,873.
Sampdoria 3 (Mancini 10, 26, Lombardo 90), Udinese 1 (Branca 11). Att: 20,979.
Verona 0, Ascoli 0. Att: 12,924.

PORTUGAL

Nacional 0, Porto 3 (Aguas 16, Bandeirainha 43, Paolo Pereira 56).
Guimaraes 1 (Ndinga 12), Sporting 1 (Marlon 30).
Setubal 1 (Makukula 44), Benfica 2 (Pacheco 46, Magnusson 48).
Belenenses 1, Maritimo 0.
Boavista 0, Tirsense 0.
Amadora 0, Braga 0.
Penafiel 0, Chaves 0.
Beira Mar 0, Portimonense 0.
Uniao 1, Feirense 1.

SPAIN

Osasuna 0, Barcelona 3 (Amor 23, 68, Roberto 71). Att: 25,000.
Bilbao 1 (Uralde 38), Tenerife 1 (Rommel 39). Att: 20,000.
Real Madrid 7 (Hugo Sanchez 69, 87, 89, Butragueno 12, Schuster 38, Martin Vazquez 42, 57), Castellon 0. Att: 70,000.
Oviedo 0, Mallorca 2 (Calderon 13, Claudio 88). Att: 15,000.
Valladolid 1 (Pena 67), Rayo 0. Att: 14,000.
Zaragoza 2 (Sirakov 80, Chilavert 88pen), Real Sociedad 1 (Goicoechea 89). Att: 28,000.
Sevilla 2 (Polster 77, 85), Celta 1 (Maric 8). Att: 20,000.
Cadiz 0, At Madrid 1 (Marina 65). Att: 15,000.
Valencia 2 (Arroyo 46, Penev 63), Gijon 0. Att: 20,000.
Malaga v Logrones postponed.

Week ending February 4

BELGIUM

Racing Mechelen 0, Anderlecht 3 (Van der Linden 4, Jankovic 14, 44).
Antwerp 1 (Claesen 55), Cercle 1 (De Buyser 10).
Lierse 3 (Heijlen 1, Viscaal 30 pen, 87pen), Kortrijk 0.
Brugge 3 (Farina 24, Booy 68, Disztl 88), Mechelen 0.
Ekeren 0, Gent 1 (Ganssens 3).
Waregem 0, St Truiden 3 (Cvetkovic 25, Coenen 67, Lange 70).
Liege 3 (Milosevic 7, Boffin 21, Houben 77), Beerschot 1 (Brylle 14).
Beveren 0, Standard 1 (Vos 55).
Lokeren 3 (Meszaros 7, 86, Samson 12), Charleroi 1 (Camataru 16).

FRANCE

Brest 1 (Cabanas 33), Monaco 1 (Diaz 64). Att: 6,000.
Caen 1 (Divert 37pen), Cannes 0. Att: 7,000.
Lille 2 (Perilleux 22pen, Vandenbergh 71), Paris SG 0. Att: 8,000.
Metz 1 (Hinschberger 75), Mulhouse 1 (Ndiaye 7). Att: 8,000.
Montpellier 1 (Blanc 57pen), Marseille 1 (Francescoli 48). Att: 20,000.
Nice 1 (Bocande 32), Nantes 2 (Youm 12, Robert 55). Att: 6,000.
Racing 3 (Avenet 57, Placido 84, Ben Mabrouk 89), Auxerre 1 (Kovacs 66). Att: 3,000.
Sochaux 1 (Bazdarevic 10), Lyon 0. Att: 5,000.
Saint-Etienne 1 (Witschge 51), Bordeaux 1 (Den Boer 78). Att: 25,000.
Toulon 0, Toulouse 0. Att: 7,000.

GREECE

Levadiakos 1, Kalamaria 0.
OFI 3, Doxa 1.
PAOK 1, Apollon 1.
Ethnikos 0, AEK 3 (Patikas 25, Savevski 42, Savidis 88).
Ionikos 0, Olympiakos 3 (Mustakidis 16, Pahaturidis 18, Tsaluhidis 62).
Larissa 1 (Dragolov), Panathinaikos 4 (Saravakos 32, K Warzycha 53, Georgakopulos 61, Antoniou 72).
Volos 2, Aris 0. Iraklis 3, Xanthi 1.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Fortuna 1, Feyenoord 1. Att: 3,500.
Friday:
Roda 3 (Diliberto 6, Van Loen 17, Haan 89), PSV Eindhoven 1 (Romario 86). Att: 15,000.
Weekend:
Willem II 0, RKC Walwijk 2 (De Wijs 12, 67). Att: 6,250.
Den Bosch 0, Volendam 0. Att: 1,250.
NEC Nijmegen 0, MVV Maastricht 0. Att: 2,500.
Haarlem 0, Fortuna 3. Att: 4,500.
Groningen 2, Utrecht 0. Att: 3,600.
Ajax 4 (Pettersson 12pen, 53, Willems 65, Roy 67), Twente 0. Att: 12,300.
Den Haag 1, Sparta 0. Att: 4,000.
Feyenoord 0, Vitesse 0. Att: 6,500.

ITALY

Midweek:
Italian Cup semi-finals, first legs: Juventus 2 (Casiraghi 5 and 85), Roma 0; Milan 0, Napoli 0.
Weekend:
Atalanta 2 (Madonna 16, Porrini 31), Sampdoria 2 (Katanec 21, 76). Att: 42,000.
Bari 1 (Maiellaro 89), Juventus 1 (Schillaci 41). Att: 35,000.
Cesena 0, Roma 0. Att: 18,000.
Fiorentina 2 (Baggio 23, Kubik 48), Milan 3 (Evani 55, Van Basten 60, 66). Att: 27,000 (at Perugia).
Genoa 0, Bologna 0. Att: 30,000.
Inter 0, Ascoli 0. Att: 38,000.
Lazio 0, Verona 0. Att: 22,000.
Napoli 3 (Alemao 23, Maradona 33, 68), Cremonese 0. Att: 65,000.
Udinese 3 (DeVitis 26, 67, Balbo 45), Lecce 1 (Virdis 40). Att: 18,000.

PORTUGAL

Cup (1/16th finals), selected results: Setubal 2, Benfica 1; Belenenses 1, Nacional 0; Guimaraes 5, Freamunde 2; Parades 0, Porto 5.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Mallorca 1 (Nadal 36), Castellon 1 (Victor 60pen). Att:15,000.
Barcelona 0, Oviedo 0. Att: 50,000.
Real Sociedad 1 (Moreno og 17), Valladolid 1 (Hidalgo 64). Att: 12,000.
Celta 0, Bilbao 0. Att: 10,000.
Gijon 4 (Narciso 8, 43, Emilio 47pen, Ablanedo 74), Cadiz 0. Att: 13,318.
Valencia 1 (Eloy 77), Real Madrid 1 (Hugo Sanchez 76). Att: 50,000.
At Madrid 2 (Futre 20, 70), Malaga 0. Att: 7,000.
Logrones 2 (Quique Setien 33, Rosagro 37), Sevilla 1 (Cholo 44). Att: 10,000.
Tenerife 1 (Tono 89pen), Zaragoza 2 (Pardeza 46, Juanito 74). Att: 30,000.
Rayo v Osasuna abandoned (lights failure) at 1-0.
Weekend:
Sevilla 2 (Carbajal 35, Rafa Paz 57), At Madrid 1 (Futre 89). Att: 35,000.
Real Madrid 1 (Hierro 33), Mallorca 1 (Baragan 43). Att: 90,000.
Castellon 1 (Salvador 54pen), Barcelona 0. Att: 15,000.
Osasuna 1 (Ciganda 34), Real Sociedad 1 (Aldridge 44). Att: 25,000.
Valladolid 1 (Jankovic 90), Tenerife 2 (Esteberanz 41, 63). Att: 12,000.
Zaragoza 1 (Pardeza 34pen), Celta 1 (Vecino 61). Att: 25,000.
Bilbao 1 (Lakabeg 73), Logrones 0. Att: 30,000.
Malaga 1 (Mata 85), Gijon 0. Att: 20,000.
Oviedo 3 (Munoz 54pen, Vinala 81, Julia 85), Rayo 2 (Sabas 10, Rodrigo 58). Att: 22,000.
Cadiz 0, Valencia 2 (Nando 16, Fernando 68). Att: 12,000.

Week ending February 11

Winter break: West Germany and Eastern European championships. Close season: Scandinavia, Denmark, Iceland, etc.

BELGIUM

Anderlecht 7 (Oliveira 2, Keshi 25, 71,Van der Linden 35, Degryse 60pen, Nilis 80, 88), Lokeren 0.
Charleroi 4 (Gerard 7, Hurtado 32, Camataru 43, Beugnes), Ekeren 0.
Mechelen 2 (Wilmots 23, Bosman 40), Lierse 0.
Standard Liege 2 (Thans, Tikva), FC Liege 0.
Beerschot 2 (Rasquin, Pinter pen), Waregem 0.
St Truiden 1 (rgen Langer 5), Antwerp 0.
Cercle 4, Racing Mechelen 1.
Gent 2, Brugge 2.
Kortrijk 4, Beveren 0.

FRANCE

Cannes 0, Saint-Etienne 0. Att: 5,000.
Auxerre 1 (Kovacs 73), Sochaux 1 (Lada 62). Att: 7,000.
Bordeaux 2 (Den Boer 43, 80), Caen 1 (Divert 65). Att: 15,000.
Lyon 3 (Genesio 27, 76, Kabongo 58), Montpellier 1 (Julio Cesar 90). Att: 15,000.
Marseille 4 (Papin 1)pen, 15, Francescoli 19, Waddle 45), Racing 1 (Bouderbala 43). Att: 35,000.
Monaco 2 (Diaz 3, 50), Toulon 1 (Bernardet 28). Att: 3,000.
Mulhouse 2 (Krncevic 31, Sliskovic 42pen), Lille 1 (Perilleux 76pen). Att: 5,000.
Nantes 0, Metz 0. Att: 5,000.
Paris SG 3 (Calderon 18pen, Bravo 42, Susic 67), Brest 1 (Colleter 55). Att: 8,000.
Toulouse 0, Nice 1 (Fouca 89). Att: 8,000.

GREECE

AEK 3 (Okonski 21, 55, Patikas 86), Larissa 1 (Karapialis 27).
Apollon 3, Ethnikos 0.
Kalamaria 0, PAOK 0.
Aris 2, Xanthi 2.
Doxa 2, Serres 0.
OFI 2, Levadiakos 0.
Panathinaikos 1 (Saravakos 10), Iraklis 1 (Malios 71).
Panionios 1, Ionikos 1.
Olympiakos 4 (Detari three, Tsiantakis), Volos 0.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Volendam 1 (Steur 40), Groningen 2 (Meyer 66, Eykelkamp 90). Att: 2,500.
Friday:
MVV 1 (Arts 7), Ajax 0. Att: 10,500.
Weekend:
PSV Eindhoven 6 (Chovanec 5, Romario 23, 61, Ellerman 40, Kieft 73, Boerebach 82), NEC Nijmegen 0. Att: 23,100.
Fortuna Sittard 0, Groningen 0. Att: 3,600.
Feyenoord 5 (Van Geel 21, 68, 89, Keur 32, 74), Haarlem 0. Att: 9,714.
RKC 3 (Treffers 15, Gouda 22, Trost 42), Roda 1 (Hofman 37). Att: 4,200.
Volendam 2 (Steltenpool 45, Vermes 52), Willem II 1 (Roode 44). Att: 3,800.
Vitesse 2 (Van der Brom 13, Bos 90), Sparta 1 (Houtman 28). Att: 9,000.
Twente 1 (Avest 24), Den Haag 0. Att: 4,000.

ITALY

Midweek:
Milan 0, Verona 0. Att: 30,000.
Weekend:
Ascoli 1 (Sabato 90, Bari 1 (Gi Gennaro 58). Att: 8,000.
Cesena 0, Atalanta 0. Att: 12,000.
Cremonese 2 (Dezotti 16, Piccioni 28), Bologna 1 (Waas 80). Att: 20,000.
Juventus 1 (Casiraghi 72), Lazio 0. Att: 20,000.
Lecce 1 (Benedetti 73), Verona 0. Att: 13,000.
Milan 3 (Massaro 46, Maldini 70, Van Basten 76), Napoli 0. Att: 65,000.
Roma 1 (Tempestili 50), Inter 1 (Klinsmann 10). Att: 22,000.
Sampdoria 0, Genoa 0. Att: 42,000.
Udinese 1 (Mattei 44), Fiorentina 1 (Buso 45). Att: 18,000.

PORTUGAL

Chaves 1, Boavista 0.
Tirsense 3, Uniao 0.
Feirense 1, Amadora 1.
Braga 3, Belenenses 0.
Maritimo 0, Setubal 0.
Benfica 2 (Magnusson 12, Pacheco 43), Guimaraes 0.
Sporting 2 (Cadete, Silas), Beira Mar 0.
Portimonense 2, Nacional 1.
Porto 4 (Aguas 18, 65, Madjer 55, 87), Penafiel 0.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Cup semi-finals, first legs: Cadiz 0, Real Madrid 1 (Paco Llorente 86). Att: 22,000.
Barcelona 2 (Koeman 58pen, Roberto 84), Valencia 1 (Fernando Gomez 34). Att: 45,000.
Weekend:
Cadiz 0, Real Madrid 3 (Martin Vazquez 23, 81, Butragu- 47) Att: 23,000.
Rayo Vallecano 0, Castellon 2 (Fernandez, Victor).
Barcelona 1 (Amor 1), Mallorca 1 (Garcia Cortes 81pen). Att: 50,000.
At Madrid 2 (Baltazar 3pen, Orejuela 90), Bilbao 0.
Real Sociedad 1 (Aldridge), Oviedo 1 (Carlos).
Celta 0, Valladolid 0.
Logrones 2 (Sarabia, Marcos), Zaragoza 1 (Juanito).
Gijon 0, Sevilla 1 (Paz).
Tenerife 2 (Eduardo, Victor), Osasuna 0.
Valencia 3 (Fenoll 53, 78, Giner 42), Malaga 0.

Week ending February 18

BELGIUM

Midweek:
Cup, qtr-fnls, 1st legs: Diest 2, Standard 3; St Truiden 0, Ekeren 3; Racing Genk 0, Lokeren 1; Liege 1, Anderlecht 0.

GREECE

Midweek:
Cup qtr-fnls, 1st legs: Olympiakos 5, Volos 0; Apollon 1, Larissa 1; Athinaikos 3, OFI 0; Panathiniakos 7, Iraklis 1.

HOLLAND

Midweek:
Cup qtr-fnls:
PSV Eindhoven 4 (Kieft 9, 78, Volkerink og 47, Romario 50), Emmen 0. Att: 9,200.
Volendam 0, Willem II 1 (De Roode 68). Att: 2,800.
Fortuna Sittard 0, Ajax 1 (Jonk 30). Att: 8,000. *Maessen (Fortuna) and Menzo (Ajax) sent off.
Roda 2 (Van der Vaart 6, 101), Vitesse 2 (Thijssen 40, De Vries 116). Vitesse 4-3 on pens, aet. Att: 7,500.

LEAGUE TABLES AND RESULTS

ITALY

Midweek:
Cup semi-finals, 2nd legs:
Roma 3 (Di Mauro 9, Bonetti og 27, Tempestili 73), Juventus 2 (Alessio 50, Schillaci 64). Juventus 4-3 on agg.
Napoli 1 (Maradona 79pen), Milan 3 (Massaro 42, 88, Van Basten 77). Milan 3-1 on agg.

SPAIN

Midweek:
Mallorca 1, Rayo 0.
Castellon 0, Real Sociedad 2 (Menchaca 31, Aldridge 89).
Oviedo 2, Tenerife 1.
Osasuna 1, Celta 0.
Valladolid 0, Logrones 1.
Zaragoza 0, At Madrid 2 (Donato 50, Marina 62). *Sirakov (Zaragoza) and Orejuela (At Madrid) sent off.
Bilbao 1, Gijon 0.
Malaga 1, Cadiz 0.
Sevilla 4 (Polsyter 18, 84, Conte 40, Herrero 49), Valencia 0. Att: 45,000.
Real Madrid v Barcelona.

GOLDEN SHOE TOP TEN

(Europe's top league scorer)

1 Rodax (Admira Wacker)	27
2 Hugo Sanchez (Real Madrid)	24
3 Magnusson (Benfica)	23
4 Romario (PSV)	21
5 Feyyaz (Besiktas)	19
Papin (Marseille)	19
Penev (CFKA/Valencia)	19
Stoichkov (CFKA)	19
9 Polster (Sevilla)	17
Zamorano (St Gallen)	17

EUROPEAN TABLES

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nentori	17	9	4	4	24	15	24
Dinamo	17	8	5	4	21	13	22
Partizani	17	8	4	5	33	20	20
Flamurtari	17	8	2	7	20	14	19
Vllaznia	17	7	5	5	22	21	19
Apolonia	17	8	4	5	21	17	18
Luftetari	17	7	2	8	17	21	16
Lokomotiva	17	6	3	8	17	21	15
Labinoti	17	6	3	8	11	19	13
Tomorri	17	2	8	7	14	21	11
Besa	17	4	5	8	15	28	11
Beselidhja	17	3	7	7	17	22	10

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	21	14	5	2	42	18	33
Anderlecht	21	14	4	3	49	8	32
Mechelen	21	10	10	1	34	8	30
Antwerp	21	10	8	3	42	20	28
Cercle Bruges	21	10	6	5	34	22	26
Standard	21	9	7	5	29	20	25
Gent	21	7	8	6	24	22	22
Lokeren	21	7	7	7	24	36	21
Lierse	21	8	4	9	27	38	20
Charleroi	21	7	6	8	29	27	20
Kortrijk	21	6	7	8	20	29	19
FC Liege	21	5	7	9	17	20	17
St. Truiden	21	5	7	9	18	30	17
Ekeren	21	7	2	12	24	34	16
Beerschot	21	5	6	10	19	34	16
Beveren	21	5	4	12	18	38	14
Waregem	21	3	5	13	19	45	11
Racing M	21	2	7	12	13	33	11

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	24	16	6	2	69	21	38
Atl. Madrid	24	13	6	5	35	24	32
Valencia	24	11	10	3	39	25	32
Barcelona	24	14	3	7	49	23	31
Real Sociedad	24	10	8	6	26	22	28
Sevilla	24	12	3	9	37	31	27
Osasuna	23	10	6	7	30	28	26
Mallorca	24	7	12	5	21	20	26
Oviedo	24	7	11	6	25	22	25
Zaragoza	24	10	5	9	36	37	25
Logrones	23	10	3	10	23	31	23
Bilbao	24	7	8	9	21	24	22
Castellon	24	6	10	8	21	31	22
Gijon	24	8	4	12	24	23	20
Valladolid	24	5	9	10	16	24	19
Tenerife	24	5	8	11	25	36	18
Malaga	23	5	8	10	14	30	18
Celta	24	3	10	11	17	26	16
Cadiz	24	6	4	14	15	40	16
Rayo Vallecano	23	3	6	14	20	45	12

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEK	20	13	6	1	42	9	32
Olympiakos	20	13	6	1	35	10	32
Panathinaikos	20	11	8	1	38	17	30
PAOK	20	13	4	3	31	14	30
Heraklis	20	9	6	5	26	22	24
OFI	20	9	3	8	27	21	21
Larissa	20	8	5	7	23	23	21
Panionios	20	6	8	6	28	15	20
Aris	20	6	8	6	23	23	20
Doxa	20	6	7	7	23	22	19
Kalamaria	20	6	6	8	21	21	18
Levadiakos	20	9	2	9	25	25	16
Apollon	20	4	8	8	19	22	16
Panserraikos	20	5	5	10	25	31	15
Volos	20	6	2	12	20	39	14
Ionikos	20	2	6	12	14	38	10
Xanthi	20	3	4	13	10	38	10
Ethnikos	20	3	2	15	8	33	8

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	19	15	3	1	41	5	33
Benfica	19	13	5	1	50	8	31
Guimaraes	19	12	5	2	28	13	29
Sporting	19	11	6	2	22	9	28
Setubal	19	8	5	6	23	17	21
Braga	19	6	8	5	18	18	20
Belenenses	19	8	4	7	18	21	20
Chaves	19	6	8	5	21	24	20
Boavista	19	6	6	7	28	19	18
Amadora	19	6	6	7	23	17	18
Tirsense	19	4	10	5	11	15	18
Beira Mar	19	4	6	9	8	22	14
Maritimo	19	2	9	8	13	25	13
Penafiel	19	4	5	10	13	31	13
Portimonense	19	4	4	11	15	34	12
Uniao	19	3	6	10	13	28	12
Feirense	19	3	6	10	11	29	12
Nacional	19	0	10	9	12	33	10

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	25	17	5	3	40	12	39
Marseille	25	15	6	4	52	23	36
Sochaux	25	13	4	8	36	27	30
Monaco	25	10	10	5	23	16	30
Toulouse	25	9	9	7	26	24	27
Paris St Ger.	25	11	5	9	28	28	27
Lyon	24	10	5	9	27	27	25
Nantes	24	8	8	8	23	21	24
St. Etienne	25	9	6	10	29	33	24
Lille	25	9	5	11	31	30	23
Auxerre	25	6	11	8	30	30	23
Toulon	25	7	9	9	21	30	23
Mulhouse	25	8	6	11	30	33	22
Metz	25	5	12	8	23	27	22
Brest	25	9	4	12	20	28	22
Caen	25	8	6	11	25	35	22
Cannes	25	7	7	11	26	32	21
Racing Paris	25	7	6	12	30	45	20
Montpellier	25	7	5	13	32	39	19
Nice	25	5	9	11	25	37	19

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	26	14	8	4	50	26	50
Aston Villa	24	15	4	5	41	21	49
Arsenal	24	13	3	8	38	25	42
Forest	25	11	7	7	38	25	40
Tottenham	25	11	6	8	38	31	39
Everton	25	11	5	9	34	31	38
Coventry	25	11	4	10	24	32	37
Chelsea	26	9	9	8	41	39	36
Derby	24	10	5	9	31	21	35
Southampton	24	9	8	7	46	41	35
Norwich	25	9	8	8	28	27	35
Wimbledon	25	7	11	7	28	28	32
QPR	24	7	9	8	26	28	30
Sheff. Wed	27	7	8	12	22	36	29
C. Palace	25	8	5	12	30	50	29
Man. Utd	25	7	7	11	30	35	28
Man. City	25	7	7	11	27	39	28
Luton	24	5	10	9	27	34	25
Millwall	26	5	9	12	32	45	24
Charlton	24	3	7	14	19	36	16

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV Eind.	21	13	4	4	66	25	30
Vitesse	22	10	8	4	36	18	28
Roda JC	22	10	8	4	35	25	28
FC Twente	22	9	9	4	27	27	27
Ajax	20	10	6	4	40	16	26
Volendam	22	10	6	6	34	26	26
RKC	22	10	6	6	32	27	26
Fort. Sittard	22	7	11	4	21	18	25
MVV	22	7	9	6	30	36	23
FC Groningen	21	7	8	6	31	26	22
FC Den Haag	21	8	4	9	37	39	20
Sparta	21	7	5	9	30	36	19
FC Utrecht	21	7	4	10	20	33	18
Feyenoord	22	4	9	9	29	34	17
NEC	22	4	7	11	24	46	15
Willem II	22

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World Cup warm-up dates to watch for

IN RESPONSE to a stream of readers' inquiries, this is the current schedule of fixtures, especially World Cup warm-up matches, for the first half of the year:

FEBRUARY
28.02.90 France v West Germany (Montpellier)
Egypt v Austria (Cairo)
Yugoslavia v Uruguay (prov)
U21: France v West Germany

MARCH
2. 3.90 African Nations' Chp opens in Algeria
7. 3.90 C1-2-3 quarter-finals, 1st legs
Yugoslavia v Uruguay (prov)
9. 3.90 Gulf Cup Final (Kuwait)
10.03.90 United States v Finland (Tampa)
14.03.90 E21 q/1: West Germany v Soviet Union (home)
16. 3.90 African Nations' Final
20. 3.90 Hungary v United States (Budapest)
21. 3.90 C1-2-3 quarter-finals, 2nd legs
Yugoslavia v Opponent to be named
25. 3.90 Egypt v Rumania (Cairo)
26. 3.90 Old Germany XI v World XI (Dresden)
28. 3.90 East Germany v United States (East Berlin)
Sov Union v Holland (Kiev)
England v Brazil
Spain v Austria (Malaga)
Rep Ireland v Wales
Hungary v France
Poland v Yugoslavia (Warsaw)
Scotland v Argentina
E21 q/2: West Germany v Soviet Union (?home)
31. 3.90 Switzerland v Italy (Basle)

APRIL
3. 4.90 Switzerland v Rumania
4. 4.90 Czechoslovakia v Egypt
8. 4.90 United States v Iceland
11. 4.90 C1-2-3 semi-finals, 1st legs
Austria v Hungary (Salzburg or Vienna)
Turkey v Denmark
Algiers v Sweden (Algiers)
25. 4.90 C1-2-3 semi-finals, 2nd legs
England v Czechoslovakia
Scotland v East Germany
Rep Ireland v Sov Union (prov)
Rumania v Holland
Sweden v Wales (Stockholm)
26. 4.90 West Germany v Uruguay (Stuttgart)

MAY
3. 5.90 Austria v Argentina (Vienna)
5. 5.90 Brazil v Rumania
8. 5.90 Switzerland v Argentina (Bern or Zurich)
9. 5.90 UEFA Cup Final, 1st leg
13. 5.90 Bulgaria v Brazil (Sofia)
15. 5:90 England v Denmark
16. 5.90 Cup-winners' Cup Final
Scotland v Egypt
19. 5.90 Scotland v Poland
20. 5.90 Rumania v Eguypt
22. 5.90 Israel v Argentina (Tel-Aviv)
England v Uruguay (Wembley, prov)
23. 5.90 UEFA Cup Final, 2nd leg
26. 5.90 West Germany v Czechoslovakia (Dusseldorf)
Belgium v Rumania (Brussels)
27. 5.90 Sweden v Finland (Stockholm)
29. 5.90 Israel v Soviet Union (Tel-Aviv)
30. 5.90 Champions' Cup Final
West Germany v Denmark (Gelsenkirchen)
Yugoslavia v Uruguay (Zagreb)
Austria v Holland or Portugal (Vienna)

JUNE
2. 6.90 Tunisia v England
2. 6.90 Belgium v Mexico (Brussels)
3. 6.90 Yugoslavia v Holland (prov)
6. 6.90 Poland v Brussels
8. 6.90 World Cup Finals Opening Match (Milan)

JULY
8. 6.90 World Cup Final (Rome)

PEN PALS

AMERICAN MALE, 21, wishes to correspond with football fans of The Netherlands, U.K., Sweden and especially West Germany. Write in German or English to: Greg Neal, 504 W.24th %117 Austin, Tex 78705, U.S.A.

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MOROCCAN, 20, seeks pen pals worldwide. Please write to: Lahmer Lanfadel, GR90, No 38 P.A.M. Kenitra, Morocco.

22-YEAR-OLD MALE, would like to correspond with pen pals from all over the world. Write to: Lahmer Brahim, GR90, No 38 PAM, Kenitra, Morocco.

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EXCHANGES
IRISH SUPPORTER would like to exchange football programmes from European fixtures and South American fixtures. Write to: Joseph Dillon Jnr, 5 Verbena Lanw, Sutton, Dublin 13, Ireland.

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EUROSPORT

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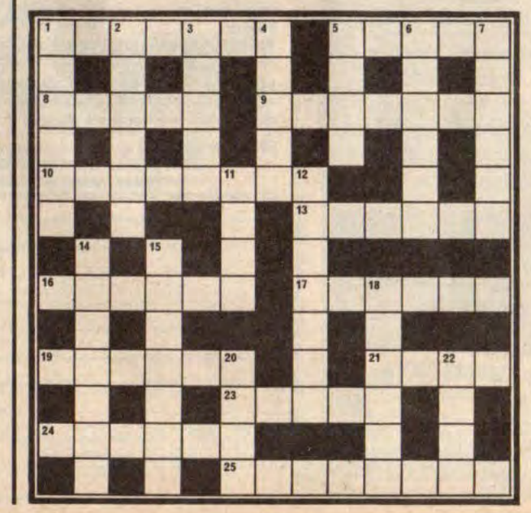
Thu Mar 1: 4pm-6pm football. Sat Mar 3: 7pm-9, football.
Sun Mar 4: 7pm-9 football. Mon Mar 5: 1pm-3 football. Tue Mar 6: 1pm-3 football. Wed Mar 7: 11.30am-12 goals. 10pm-midnight Euro club quarter-finals, 1st legs. Thu Mar 8: 4pm-6 football and 10.05pm-midnight. Fri Mar 9: 11am-12.30 World Cup.
Sun Mar 11: 7pm-9 Spanish football. Mon Mar 12: 11am-1pm. Tue Mar 13: 5.30pm-6. Fri, Mar 16: 1pm-3 World Cup. Sat, Mar 17: 7pm-9 football.
Sun Mar 18: 7pm-9. Mon, Mar 19: midday-2pm, Tue Mar 20: 1pm-3 football. Wed Mar 21: 10pm-11, European club football. Thu Mar 22: football 2pm-3. Fri Mar 23: midday-1 and 6pm-7. Sat Mar 24: 11.30pm-12.30.
Sun Mar 25: 7pm-9 Spanish football. Mon Mar 27: 2pm-4 football and 5.30-6 pm goals. Wed Mar 30: England one-day match abandoned. Thu, Mar 31: 11am-midday World Cup. 7pm-9: football.

SCREENSPORT
Thu Mar 1: 4pm-6 Spanish football. 7.30pm-8.30 Argentine football. Fri Mar 2: 10am-11.45 Spanish football. Sat Mar 3: midday-1 Argentine football.
Sun Mar 4: midnight.30-1.30 Argentine football. 4am-6 Spanish football. 12pm-2 Spanish football. 9.15pm-10.15 Argentine football. Mon Mar 5: 7.30pm-9.15 Spanish football. Tue Mar 6: 7am-8.45 amnd 6.30pm-8.30 Spanish football. Midnight-1am Argentine football. Wed Mar 7: 4.15pm-6 Spanish football. Thu Mar 8: 4pm-6 Spanish football. 7.30pm-8.30 Argentine football. Fri Mar 9: 10am-11.45 Spanish football. Sat Mar 10: 8.15-10 Spanish football. 12-1 and 10pm-11 Argentine football.
Sun Mar 11: 3.30am-5.30 and 12pm-2 Spanish football. Mon Mar 12: 10am-11 Argentine football. 7.30pm-9.15 Spanish football. Tue Mar 13: 7am-8.45 and 7.30pm-9.30 Spanish football. Wed Mar 4: 4.15pm-6 Spanish football. Thu Mar 15: 4pm-6 Spanish football. 7.30pm-8.30 Argentine football. Fri Mar 16: 10am-11.45 and 2.30pm-3.30 Spanish football. Sat Mar 17: 5am-7 Spanish football. 11.30-12.30 Argentine football.
Sun Mar 18: 12am-1.45 Spanish football. 5pm-6 Argentine football. Mon Mar 19: 7am-8 Argentine football. 7.30pm-9.15 Spanish football. Tue Mar 20: 7am-8.45 and 6.30-8.30 Spanish football. Wed Mar 21: 4.15pm-6 Spanish football. Thu Mar 22: 4pm-6 Spanish football. 7.30-8.30 Argentine football. Fri Mar 23: 7am-8 Argentine football. 10am-11.45 Spanish football. Sat Mar 24: 5am-7 Spanish football. 12-1 Argentine football. midnight.30-1.30 Argentine football.
Sun Mar 25: 4am-6 and 12-2 Spanish football. Mon Mar 26: 7.30pm-9.15 Spanish football. Tue Mar 27: 7am-8.45 and 7.30pm-9.30 Spanish football. Wed Mar 28: 4.15pm-6. Thu Mar 29: 4pm-6 Spanish football. 7.30-8.30pm Argentine football. Fri Mar 30: 10am-11.45 and 10-midnight Spanish football. Sat Mar 31: 12pm-1.

WORLD SOCCER CROSSWORD compiled by Barry Talbot



ACROSS
1. Former Italian tough guy defender.
5. Forename of man who gave his name to the World Cup.
8. B.B.C. man who started out reporting on Brighton.
9. One of the elite band with 100 caps.
10. Italian league side.
13. First Division goalkeeper.
16. Former Liverpool and Eire International.
17. Member of Italy's 1970 World Cup Final side.
19. British player now in Spain.
21. – Liedholm, former top player and coach.
23. The first 100,000 teenager.
24. Country that hosted the 1984 European Championships.
25. 1966 winners of the European Cup-Winners Cup.

DOWN
1. Legendary goalkeeper.
2. French Soccer club.
3. West German goalkeeper.
4. Derby County striker.
5. Scored the winning goal in the 1965 European Cup Final
6. Former Villa and England striker.
7. World famous club side.
11. Held Scotland to an embarrassing World Cup draw.
12. Czech league side.
14. Napoli defender.
15. Former Q.P.R. and England defender.
18. Winterburn's predecessor at Arsenal.
20. Jimmy, Spurs star of the twenties.
22. Scene of England's 1970 World Cup defeat by W. Germany.

LETTERS

Hibs' John Collins.

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Brits team out

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I would suggest a home based Scotland team as follows:– Goram – McKimmie, McLeish, Levein, Malpas, Bett, McStay, McInally Collins, McCoist, and Johnston.

ALASTAIR ROBERTSON, Atholl Crescent, Ralston, Paisley.

More results

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I hope my ideas will be given consideration.

NICHOLAS RUANE, Ridgepark Drive, Lanark, Strathclyde.

Travesty

SIR – I think FIFA's decisions to ban Chile, Mexico and Nigeria from international football are all travesties. FIFA seems to be much more effective when it comes to punishing small countries. In the qualifiers of the 1987 Under-16 Cup, Italy fielded an average player called Richardo Secci and were disqualified from the finals and that opened the way for Turkey who were edged by France for the third qualifying spot from Europe. However, FIFA changed the decision and let Italy go.

GIRAY ERTAZ, Istanbul, Turkey.

Few stars

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The only state championship that is worthy of the name of Brazilian football is the 'Carioca' championship – the one between the leading clubs of Rio de Janeiro last season saw some brilliant matches including Flamengo v Botafogo (3-3); and the best match of the Brazilian championship, Flamengo v Fluminensie (5-0), Zico's farewell match at Flamengo.

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LETTERS

Mitilimahenge Mwaveta Benson, U.K. Restaurant, Mail Bag 1134, Mbeya, Tanzania, East Africa.

ROMANIAN STUDENT, 22, wishes to correspond with pen pals from England. Collector of football souvenirs. Please write to: Alexili Dorel, Str. Hasdeu Nr. 28, 2000 Ploiesti, Romania.

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